

## OPENING STATEMENT TO THE CONFERENCE

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Let me begin by thanking the conference organizers for their invitation to His Excellency Joseph Caron, Canada's Ambassador to China, to address this conference, and by expressing his regret at not being able to be here in person. It is my privilege and pleasure to be here to represent the Embassy of Canada on his behalf.

As Embassy Counsellor and Head of its political section, I am part of the Canadian Government team that manages our bilateral relations with the People's Republic of China, and it is in that context – that is, the Canada-China bilateral relationship – that I offer the following brief remarks.

The fact that we are gathered here in Lijiang, China reflects the predominant truism of contemporary international relations: on climate change, as on virtually every other item on the global agenda, China is a player of central importance.

This in turn reflects the transformation underway here over the past quarter-century of reform and opening, a transformation with profound and growing consequences for China's role in the world.

Last year, enjoying annual economic growth that topped 9 percent, China's GDP reached USD 1.4 trillion, making China the globe's sixth largest economy. The Chinese leadership has matched impressive growth with more active international engagement, evident in China's entry into the WTO and recent actions such as addressing the North Korean nuclear crisis. The social and environmental dimensions of China's growth command global attention. The prosperity and security of countries around the world are increasingly bound up with the directions in which it develops over the next years and decades.

As Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Bill Graham noted, these are the factors that help to explain why expanding our relationship with China is fundamentally important for Canada.

That relationship is growing and multifaceted. Trade and investment links are on the rise; China is now Canada's fourth most important export destination and our third most important import source. Political ties are strong; our two Prime Ministers have exchanged visits. People-to-people contacts make ours a special bond, reinforced by the fact that over one million Canadians – one in thirty – are of Chinese origin.

In sum, from Canada's perspective – and, I suspect, from that of our Chinese friends as well — our partnership counts among our most significant. And nowhere is this more easily apparent, I would argue, than with respect to our cooperation on climate change.

This audience does not need reminding of the challenges we face in this regard. In Canada we see the commitment to action on climate change as an opportunity to create the climate-friendly economy of tomorrow – helping to unleash the economic power of innovation and new ways of achieving sustainable growth.

Our Chinese friends share our desire to see sustainable development that protects the global commons. We both recognize that without significant investments and technological changes, China's stated goal of quadrupling GDP by 2020 could come at the expense of the Chinese environment and hurt the quality of life of both the Chinese and Canadian people.

Canada is pleased to be working together with China toward achieving the goal of successful, sustainable development. In this regard, Canada and China can be said to have formed a strategic partnership in the fight against global climate change.

The Government of Canada, through the Canadian International Development Agency, provides funding for seven bilateral cooperation projects in China in the area of climate change, with a total Canadian contribution of approximately 20 million Canadian dollars. They cover the areas of policy dialogue, awareness and outreach, national communications, clean development mechanism, solar energy, small hydro, boilers, coal bed

methane and carbon sequestration. These projects are producing significant results in building China's policy and technological capacity.

Canada is therefore pleased to be among the sponsors of this conference on "Climate Change: Building the Adaptive Capacity." To quote Don MacIver of the Meteorological Service of Canada, responses to the threats to sustainable development posed by climate change "must include adaptation actions that will reduce vulnerabilities to climate variability and extremes and minimize negative impacts, maximize positive impacts, and allow both Canada and China to take advantage of opportunities that arise as a result of these climate changes."

In conclusion, I would like to return to the broader bilateral context within which our important cooperation on climate change takes place. Intensive expert-level exchanges such as this are key to the progress we all wish to see made toward truly sustainable development. Yet sustained engagement at the political level is important in facilitating such exchanges, and our two countries have enjoyed a favourable climate in that regard.

In October 2003, during the visit to China of Prime Minister Chrétien, Canada and China issued a Joint Statement on Strengthened Dialogue and Cooperation on Climate Change, which expresses the desire of both governments to expand and intensify bilateral efforts on climate change, including the development of new policies and technologies in a wide range of sectors including energy, transportation, agriculture, forestry and environment. The Statement mandated the formation of a bilateral Climate Change Working Group to identify opportunities for cooperation and develop a program of work.

Climate change will continue to figure prominently as we move forward on our active bilateral agenda. It is a key component of the broader Canada-China dialogue that is central to Canada's efforts both to seize the opportunities and overcome the unique challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In that spirit, I wish you every success in your work here in Lijiang and in the months and years ahead.