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TO BE DELIVERED BY
SENATOR YUEN PAU WOO**

**PREPARED FOR THE CANADIAN DELEGATION TO
THE 43RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ASEAN
INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (AIPA)**

**PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA
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Colin Sawatzky
Parliamentary Information, Education and Research Services

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Honoured Speakers,

Fellow Parliamentarians,

Special Guests,

- It is my pleasure to be in Cambodia to represent the Parliament of Canada at the 43rd General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, or AIPA.
- I would especially like to extend the Canadian delegation's thanks to Cambodia for organizing this year's general assembly, as it did in 2011.
- In addition to participating at that general assembly more than a decade ago, Canadian parliamentarians visited Cambodia for the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum's Annual Meeting in 2019, and for meetings of the Francophonie Parliamentary Assembly in 2012, 2015 and 2016.
- Like Canadian parliamentarians, members of Canada's executive branch have travelled to Cambodia. Recent high-level visits include those by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the ASEAN Summit earlier this month in Phnom Penh, and by the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development for ASEAN ministerial meetings in August and September of this year.
- All of these visits by members of the legislative and executive branches highlight the significance of Canada's relationships with nations in Southeast Asia.
- Besides these visits, 2022 has also seen a pair of anniversaries: 45 years of Canada being a dialogue partner with ASEAN, and 55 years since ASEAN's founding.
- Our presence today marks the sixth consecutive year of participation by a Canadian observer delegation at an AIPA general assembly. Our ongoing engagement is a testament to the growing importance that Canadian parliamentarians from all political parties, and from both chambers of Canada's Parliament, attach to the Southeast Asian region.
- Of course, the relationship between Canada and ASEAN member states is deeper than diplomatic and other parliamentary exchanges.
- One critical aspect of Canada's relationship with ASEAN member states is the people-to-people ties that bring our countries together. In communities across Canada, there are thousands of people who have a connection to Southeast Asia, whether based on family, trade, culture, tourism, education or all of the above. I am proud to count myself among them.

- Canada and the ASEAN member states also have economic ties, with trade being one of the strongest aspects.
- Colleagues, like you, I continue to follow developments relating to a potential free trade agreement between Canada and ASEAN.
- In anticipation of the November 2021 announcement regarding the proposed launch of trade negotiations, Global Affairs Canada released a [study](#) predicting that a Canada–ASEAN trade agreement could increase ASEAN’s exports to Canada by US\$4.81 billion, and could cause Canada’s exports to ASEAN member states to rise by US\$2.67 billion.
- I think that enhanced trade, and the resulting benefits, could be one factor contributing to attainment of the theme for this year’s general assembly: “Advancing Together for Sustainable, Inclusive and Resilient ASEAN.”
- As our world faces an increasing number of common challenges, whether pandemics, conflict or climate change, forums such as ASEAN and AIPA are essential for building cooperation and understanding not only within the Southeast Asian region itself, but also between the region’s countries and others around the world. Together, countries can face these challenges, and build sustainable, inclusive and resilient policies.
- The parliamentary cooperation between ASEAN member states and their dialogue partners reminds us of the vision of ASEAN’s founders. While ASEAN started as a partnership among governments, exchanges involving legislators from ASEAN member states soon developed.
- More than 40 years ago, the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization – AIPA’s predecessor – decided to engage in dialogue with national parliaments both in and outside the region. This parliamentary diplomacy, which both complements and enriches the partnership among governments, embodies the vision of ASEAN’s founders.
- On behalf of the Parliament of Canada, we look forward to exchanging ideas with you over the coming days on topics that are important to ASEAN member states, Canada and the other observer delegations here today.
- Thank you very much.