

**SPEAKING NOTES FOR THE HONOURABLE
NOËL KINSELLA, SPEAKER OF THE SENATE,
ON THE OCCASION OF A DINNER HOSTED
BY MILORAD ŽIVKOVIĆ, SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

**SARAJEVO, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
13 SEPTEMBER 2012**

Your Excellency Speaker Milorad Živković,
Honourable Parliamentarians,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of my colleagues, I would like to begin by thanking Speaker Živković for his gracious hospitality and for providing an opportunity for our delegations to meet again. I look forward to what I know will be positive and productive discussions, both today and in the future.

Speaker Živković, it is both a pleasure to see you again so soon and an honour to continue our tradition of parliamentary exchanges. In April 2008, Canada had the pleasure of participating in the Open Parliament here in Bosnia-Herzegovina. During that event, we were fortunate to meet with students from across your country, and were happy to provide an overview of the Canadian political system and governance structure. As a former educator, I am certain that these meetings helped us to improve our knowledge of each other's systems and nations. This improved understanding will, no doubt, have a range of future benefits.

More recently, Speaker Živković, in late May of this year, we had the honour to host your visit to Canada. On that occasion, our delegations exchanged ideas and discussed such issues as international cooperation, security, immigration, parliamentary cooperation, and trade and investment opportunities. At that time, we were also able to witness – first hand – the important work of the Canada – Bosnia–Herzegovina Parliamentary Friendship Group. Established in November 2011, the Group's aim is to facilitate and improve contact between our two Parliaments. The Group is a great example of the benefits that result from fostering

inter-parliamentary exchanges. Our Parliaments must keep the communication channels open if we are to learn from each other.

Though our two countries may be separated by great geographic distances, visits such as this one allow us to explore avenues for deepening our cooperation. Indeed, we have a solid foundation upon which to build an even brighter future. Shared values have enabled Canada and Bosnia-Herzegovina to work together over the past two decades, seeking greater stability and integration in the region by supporting peace keeping, security, reconstruction, institutional reform, good governance and the rule-of-law initiatives. I am proud to note that Canada has also provided development assistance to promote free media, health, education and human rights, the latter of which is an area that is near and dear to me.

All of these efforts – parliamentary exchanges, other opportunities for bilateral dialogue and development assistance – are, I believe, proof that challenging times can also open the door to new opportunities.

Distinguished guests, our current visit will certainly not be the last time this year that our delegations will have the opportunity to meet. I am pleased to announce that, next month, Canada will have the honour to host the 127th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Quebec City. Delegations from more than 150 countries and non-governmental organizations will participate in discussions on the role of parliaments in addressing the challenges of citizenship, identity, and linguistic and cultural diversity in a globalized world. Certainly, both Canada and Bosnia-Herzegovina have a rich and diverse culture based on a multi-ethnic demographic make-up. In that context, the upcoming Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly will be interesting and useful to both our Parliaments. As well, it will offer us the opportunity to showcase to the world our unique approaches to dealing with a range of important and sensitive issues.

In closing, my colleagues and I are grateful for this opportunity to build on our already strong bilateral relationship, and we hope to continue on this path of mutual cooperation in the years to come. Let us now raise a glass in honour of our gracious host, Mr. Živković. Your insights, warmth and hospitality have made this visit truly rewarding.

Thank you.