

SPEAKING NOTES

**THE HONOURABLE NOËL A. KINSELLA
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT OF
THE HONOURABLE ZHENG SILIN AND
A PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION FROM
THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

JUNE 9, 2009

Hon. Chairman Zheng,

Members of the National People's Congress,

Ambassador Lan,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great pleasure to welcome to the Senate our colleagues from the National People's Congress, the members of their delegation, and members of the diplomatic corps of the People's Republic of China. As it is the last day in Ottawa for the delegation, I want to wish you a safe and productive completion to your travels.

Honourable Chairman Zheng, I was very pleased to meet you. You have enjoyed a long and prosperous career, both in the public and in the private sectors. You have served as Deputy Mayor of Dan Dong City, Assistant Governor of Liaoning Province and as Director of the Liaoning Economic and Foreign Trade Commission. Following that you were Governor of Jiangsu Province. You also served as Minister of Labour and Social Security of China from 2003 to 2005. It is a most impressive career.

Canadians are delighted that you have taken an interest in our country and that there is a mutual desire to foster stronger ties, not only from a friendship perspective, but also in the areas of bilateral relations, climate change, economic issues and parliamentary exchanges.

This afternoon's meeting is not only a personal pleasure, but is an opportunity to get better acquainted with our honoured guests who are citizens of a country with a rich and complex history. It is an exceptional learning opportunity, where we can share perspectives on common issues between Canada and China, as well as the great potential for collaboration between our two countries based on principles of mutual respect and friendship.

Canada has a long-standing and comprehensive relationship with the People's Republic of China (PRC) which operates on many levels, including political, commercial, scientific, cultural and academic ties. Bilateral cooperation is strong – many Canadian and provincial government departments have productive programs and memoranda of understanding with their Chinese counterparts, and hold regular exchanges. The two countries also enjoy an active working relationship in international fora, such as the UN, APEC, and WTO.

Our countries have strong people-to-people ties: over 1.3 million Canadian citizens are of Chinese origin, with over 35,000 Chinese students attending Canadian educational institutions. Chinese is Canada's third most spoken language after English and French, and immigrants born in China (including the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region) form one of the largest groups within Canada's immigrant population.

China continues to be Canada's second largest merchandise trading partner after the United States. Two-way trade amounted to \$53.0 billion in 2008, a 10.8% increase over 2007 levels. There is great potential for more.

Canadian merchandise exports to China have more than doubled over the past five years. Every region of Canada has an interest in gaining and maintaining access to the Chinese market. It is a priority market for export promotion, foreign investment attraction, innovation/Science and Technology (S&T), global value chains, international education marketing and the Asia Pacific Gateway and Corridor initiative.

There are already many ties between China and Canada and I am pleased to see the continuing work of the Canada-China Legislative Association to foster these links and our growing friendship. Visits and meetings such as we have today are a crucial element in building strong and lasting relationships.

Once again, welcome to the Senate.