

**SPEAKING NOTES  
THE HONOURABLE NOËL A. KINSELLA  
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE OF CANADA**

**ON THE OCCASION OF A DINNER HOSTED BY HIS EXCELLENCY,  
MR. TRAJKO VELJANOSKI, PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**

**SEPTEMBER 4, 2013**

Speaker Veljanoski,  
Honourable Parliamentarians,  
Distinguished guests,

On behalf of my colleagues, may I tell you how pleased we are to be here in the Republic of Macedonia, and to thank you for your warm welcome and gracious hospitality.

Since our arrival in Skopje last night, our delegation has been fortunate to meet with many political, religious, military, and business leaders. Despite the different fields these leaders represent, some common themes arose in our meetings; particularly, a desire for more knowledge and expanding Macedonia's role on the international stage. We are pleased to provide Canadian ideas on these matters, and to gain new perspectives from some of Macedonia's most respected and trusted officials.

Mr. Speaker, I would like thank you for hosting us here this evening, and also for meeting with us earlier today. Your experience and knowledge in Macedonian legal and political matters is evident. Our discussions with you have left us better informed on the challenges and successes of the Macedonian Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, in our respective roles, we share an important responsibility for ensuring the effective workings of our democratic institutions. Emerging

democracies need to be able to demonstrate to their electorate that these institutions are preferable, that they work, and that they operate in the best interests of their citizenry. Older democracies have the responsibility for setting good examples and helping make democratic reform in new democracies a success. Needless to say, this requires both effort and resources. Upon meeting Your Excellency and your colleagues, we can see that the people of Macedonia are in exceptional hands and can be confident in their parliamentary democracy.

For Canadians, Macedonia is a sound partner – one we hope soon to see at the NATO table and one with whom we expect to achieve many good things in the future. The physical distances between Canada and Macedonia are great and act as a limit to frequent travel. There are language barriers between our two countries as well. Parliamentarians, however, can help to bridge these distances and break down these barriers.

Through meetings such as this, as well as through exchanges between parliamentarians and multilateral forums such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union, we can discuss our common concerns and get to know each other better. Although the world is connected as never before, the fact remains that personal bonds are essential if we are to really know each other.

On behalf of my colleagues, I would like to say that it is a pleasure to meet with you, and that your interest in Canada's parliamentary system is welcomed.

In closing, please allow me to convey my humble gratitude to our hosts, and to our fellow parliamentarians. Rest assured that we will use what we have learned in our discussions when we make decisions about issues involving our hemisphere, and we will continue to follow developments in Macedonia closely. Thank you for your kind invitation and we look forward to meeting again with you soon.

Cheers!