

SPEAKING NOTES
The Honourable Noël A. Kinsella
Speaker of the Senate

**In honour of a Visit to Canada of a
Parliamentary Delegation from Mexico**

Thursday March 26, 2009

Honourable senators,
Members of Parliament,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

First of all, on behalf of my colleagues, it is my honour to welcome the Mexican delegation to Ottawa. Throughout the years, our two countries have forged a strong and positive relationship, and I look forward to building on that relationship today.

In January, I had the occasion to travel to your beautiful country, and among other places, I visited Mexico's famous port city of Veracruz. I was born in Saint John, New Brunswick, a port city as well, and it was particularly interesting for me to learn more about the role that the port of Veracruz has played in Mexico's history and economic development. I look forward to formally welcoming the Mexican delegation to both Ottawa and Saint John when the Canada-Mexico Inter-Parliamentary Meeting takes place in May.

Over the past two decades, our two countries have established the foundations for a very successful relationship. Canada and Mexico have enjoyed over 60 years of diplomatic relations, and our two countries have established a number of key social, economic, business, environmental, and security partnerships.

Of these partnerships, the Canada-Mexico Inter-Parliamentary meetings have been a particularly good opportunity for parliamentarians to learn more about the commonalities and differences that exist between our two countries. The fifteenth Inter-Parliamentary Meeting held in February 2008 was also very positive, as it gave us the chance to focus on important issues such as migration, hemispheric security, the economy and competitiveness.

I am pleased to note that, despite the global economic slowdown, the economic relationship between our countries remains strong. Trade between Canada and Mexico is worth about \$22 billion annually, and together with the United States, our countries have established the largest free trade area in the world. In addition to NAFTA, the Canada-Mexico Partnership is a key mechanism to deepening the commercial, political, and social ties between our two countries.

Yet despite the extensive nature of our relationship, there remains much work to do, and many opportunities not yet seized. During this time of economic crisis, it is important that our countries maintain dialogue about ways to reduce its negative impact on our relationship, as well as examining every opportunity where trade can be increased.

In closing, I would like welcome you all once again, and thank you for the work that you have done in making this meeting possible. I look forward to what I know will be positive discussions about the upcoming Canada-Mexico Inter-Parliamentary Meeting.