

Speaking Points for

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Good morning

It's an honour to be here this morning to welcome all of you to Toronto.

It is a particular pleasure to welcome His Excellency, High Commissioner Gavai and Consul General Saran.

And I want to extend a particularly warm welcome to His Excellency, Ambassador Lijun.

China joins Canada and India at this conference for the very first time this year.

That's an important new partnership in more ways than one.

Progressive businesses and progressive organizations around the world have understood for some time the critical importance of working together, across borders.

Like those of you in this room, they understand that the biggest challenges of our time, be they economic or social, cannot be addressed by a single country working in isolation.

India, China and Ontario are leading by example when it comes to the sort of collaborative efforts that will lead our communities into the future.

And it's really exciting to see our next generation – the young people in college and university today – seizing the concept of global partnerships and taking international collaboration to a whole new level.

For example - and I'm going to show some favouritism here and say that my hometown of Kitchener – home to the University of Waterloo – is one of the world's greatest examples of the difference being made by students from different countries working together.

Parker Mitchell and George Roter were two engineering students at the University of Waterloo when they co-founded the Canadian chapter of Engineers Without Borders about nine years ago.

Working with students and engineering professionals from around the world, Engineers Without Borders is today helping communities in developing countries grow food and gain access to electricity and fresh water.

That's just one example of students from different countries working together to make a difference for all.

The Quantum-Nano Centre at the University of Waterloo has a partnership with the India Institute of Technology, Bombay.

Students from around the world are working together on advances in nanotechnology research that will have an important effect on all our communities.

International researchers are working together at the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research to develop a cure for the world's top 50 cancers.

These are just a few stories out of thousands that illustrate how our brightest minds are working together, across borders, to make a difference.

As Ontario's Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, it is my great honour to support the work of our international students.

More than 37,000 students from around the world are right now settling in to Ontario's 47 public colleges and universities.

About 8500 of those students come from China. Another 1700 are from India.

And over 2400 Ontario students have been granted scholarships over the last three years that allow them to reap the benefits of an education in another country.

That's the picture today, but China, India and Ontario will continue to move forward, together as partners as the result of a number of agreements signed by Premier McGuinty's missions to your countries over the last five years.

Our nanotechnology initiative, for example, is one of 28 collaborations the Premier helped launch, during his last mission to India.

The China – Ontario – Jiangsu agreement is another.

Jiangsu province's Department of Education is working with a federation of institutions -- including York University, University of Waterloo, University of Toronto and Seneca College -- worked together to establish SuOn College.

SuOn College is a unique professional development centre for teachers and I understand that more than a thousand (1000) teachers from China have taken advantage of the new centre to further their education.

SuOn College is the largest educational presence Jiangsu has outside of China -- and we are very, very pleased it's in Ontario.

And what of our relationships with India?

Just two weeks ago, 22 Ontario students headed for India and 22 Indian students arrived in Ontario as part of the India -- Ontario -- Maharashtra -- Goa Exchange Agreement.

That's a tremendous achievement for an exchange program that is only just starting its second year.

I could go on all day about our tremendous collaborations but I'm going to end here with a few closing thoughts about why Ontario places such high value on its relationships with India and China.

Yes, it's important for our students to have international university credits on their résumé.

But our international exchange programs and our research collaborations are really about so much more...

They are about curing cancer... ..about addressing climate change ...and world hunger.

Hanging in the lecture hall at SuOn College, there's a banner that reads: "Speak English Now -- Much Success Later."

That short phrase is recognition that the 21st century belongs to those who are prepared to compete in a global economy. One in which borders are increasingly blurred ... time zones are meaningless ... and language is no barrier. Where ideas, knowledge and skills are the true currencies.

By focusing government priorities on our students, Ontario is getting its people ready for that economy, for that future, which is fast approaching.

And Ontario is honoured to share that future with our international partners.

Thank you.