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Totem Pole Ceremony - Chengdu

Totem Pole Ceremony

Chengdu, Sunday, July 4, 2010

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

I am overjoyed to join you today to mark the unveiling of the totem pole that symbolizes the strong ties of solidarity that link Canada and China, and in particular the First Nations peoples and the Qiang.

In 2008, Canadians were struck by three images of destruction emanating from this region, in the wake of the devastating earthquake. Yet we did not remain indifferent. We committed to supporting you and your efforts to rebuild the region.

And you are to be commended for your swift response to the natural disaster and your incredible efforts to rebuild, efforts which have already born fruit.

One of the most poignant examples of Canada's desire to lend a helping hand was the role that the First Nations peoples, our deepest cultural root in North America, made to support their sisters and brothers here in China, who sought to re-emerge stronger than before from the earthquake.

In this vein, I am so delighted that Grand Chief Edward John is a member of the Canadian delegation. He was there at the inception of this great partnership.

I must congratulate you, Grand Chief John, for the leadership you displayed in mobilizing First Nations peoples in Canada to support the people in this region.

And it is to complete this circle of solidarity, honoring the value and power of people-to-people relations that we are joining hands today to celebrate the unveiling of the totem pole.

May this stand as an enduring symbol of the bonds of fraternity that link Canada and China as strong allies, strategic partners, and excellent friends.

Long live our friendship!

