

**Speech by Senator Vivienne Poy
ORBIS Flying Eye Hospital Canada Goodwill Tour
Grand Cocktail Reception**

Friday July 15, 2011

Welcome friends:

It is indeed a pleasure to visit the ORBIS Flying Eye Hospital again. I first toured it in Toronto in 2006 with my husband and my staff. Wait till your turn for the tour, and you'll realize why it has such an important impact in the developing world.

ORBIS Flying Eye Hospital helps to restore sight to those who have gone blind in developing countries. It reaches out to so many people through education, training, and capacity building. It has, over the years, transformed societies by giving developing countries the greatest possible asset – knowledge and expertise, and the best hope for long-term, sustainable solutions to avoidable blindness.

As a Chinese Canadian, I am keenly aware of the expansion of our communities in Canada. Chinese has been the third most spoken language in Canada since the year 2001. In B.C., our population is approx. ½ million, and rapidly becoming the majority in cities like Vancouver and Richmond.

ORBIS Canada is very proud to have the nationwide support of our communities. And, thanks to the diligent work of the ORBIS Canada Chinese Advisory Council, over \$1 million dollars has been raised to support ORBIS projects in rural China.

Do you know that, in China, 6.6 million people are blind, mostly in the underserved rural areas? One of the important projects of ORBIS was the successful implementation of the first retinopathy of prematurity program (ROP) at the Guangzhou Children's Hospital, incorporating an examination and treatment network, and screening equipment.

ORBIS is very involved on many continents. Can you imagine, in Ethiopia, where 1.2 million people are blind, there is only 1 ophthalmologist for every 2 million people?

Another example of the work of ORBIS was, last year, with \$½ million from CIDA, ORBIS committed to strengthening the capacity of pediatric eye care services in Vietnam. There are many, many similar projects in different parts of the developing world.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the many ORBIS volunteer health professionals and the Flying Eye Hospital pilots and engineers. Because of their generosity, ORBIS administration costs are very low, with the vast majority of funds being spent directly on programs.

I would now like to thank the following sponsors:

Our presenting sponsor, Sun Life Financial, has been an important supporter both in China and India over the past 9 years. As the largest corporate

donor in the history of ORBIS Canada, we honour their significant contributions in making this ORBIS Flying Eye Hospital Canada Goodwill Tour possible.

FedEx was ORBIS's first global sponsor, and the sole sponsor of Delivering Sight Worldwide, a global program that provides direct support for ORBIS programs. Without its donations of critically needed aircraft maintenance and overnight delivery services, the Flying Eye Hospital could not fly, and vital supplies would not be delivered. Tonight we recognize and thank FedEx for their North American Aviation Sponsorship of the Goodwill Tours, and for being a dedicated Global Corporate Partner of ORBIS International.

OMEGA is our newest Global Corporate Partner. This evening, they are selling keys to a vault that contains the Hour Vision Blue Watch, a special watch that has been created to celebrate our partnership. Please purchase a key for \$100 or sign up for the ORBIS monthly donor program, and you will receive a key! Who knows – the Hour Vision Blue Watch could be yours!

We are very grateful to Alcon Laboratories for their important international contributions for over 30 years. Alcon has generously donated millions of dollars in cash to ORBIS International, as well as state-of-the-art ophthalmic equipment, pharmaceuticals and supplies for the ORBIS Flying Eye Hospital, making it possible for ORBIS volunteer ophthalmologists to teach advanced surgical techniques to doctors in the developing world. We welcome their Canadian representatives here tonight.

The Sheraton Vancouver Airport is our hotel, and food and wine sponsor for this leg of the Goodwill Tours.

Landmark Aviation is our host in allowing us to use this wonderful facility to showcase our Flying Eye Hospital.

L'Occitane en Provence is also our Global Corporate Partner of ORBIS International. They have generously provided products in your bags, as well an incentive gift. I wish to add that I use their skin care and hair products, and recommend them highly.

Last, but not least, are our media partners, helping us in raising public awareness:

- AM 1470
- Fairchild Television
- News 1130
- Ming Pao Daily News
- Talentvision
- 24 Hours
- Loretta Lam

On behalf of ORBIS Canada, my deepest thanks to all our sponsors, donors and media partners, as well as all the volunteers helping here during this leg of the ORBIS Goodwill Tour.

Thank you all for being here this evening. Do enjoy your tour and please ask many questions.