



# *Speech from the Throne*

*February 2, 2004*

*to Open the Third Session of the Thirty-Seventh Parliament of Canada*



Canada 

**National Library of Canada cataloguing in publication data**

Canada. Governor General

Speech from the Throne to Open the Third Session of the Thirty-Seventh  
Parliament of Canada : February 2, 2004

Irregular.

37th Parliament, 3rd session (2004)

Text in English and French.

Title on added t.p.: Discours du Trône ouvrant la troisième session de la  
trente-septième législature du Canada : 2 février 2004.

Issued also in electronic format: [www.pm.gc.ca](http://www.pm.gc.ca)

Alternate formats available on request through 1 800 O-Canada (1 800 622-6232)

TTY: 1 800 465-7735

ISBN 0-662-67926-1

Cat. no. SO1-1/2004

ISSN 1203-9268

1. Speech from the Throne — Canada — Periodicals.
2. Canada — Politics and government — 1993- — Periodicals.

I. Title.

II. Title: Discours du Trône ouvrant la troisième session de la  
trente-septième législature du Canada : 2 février 2004.

J103.C32 2004

320.971

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, 2004.

**Vertical lines in the margin indicate that the Governor General  
read the passage in English.**





HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE,  
MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I am pleased to greet you at the beginning of 2004, when, as Canadians, we know that our history and our capacity for change are a part of our strength as a complex and modern country. Human dignity and respect for others and a realistic awareness of our past make us a mature nation and help us to move forward to express our true values.

We have our Canadian values and we can bring them into the international sphere in a humanitarian and effective way. As Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of the Canadian Forces, I have the privilege of seeing our values as Canadians in action.

When I visited our troops in Kabul, I could see that our troops play a vital role of courage and commitment. In the past year, we have suffered tragic loss and injury to our soldiers while carrying out Canada's commitment to peace. I said to the soldiers that every single one of them carries within him or her a microcosm of our Canadian character. A desire to create a world where fairness, justice and decency reign.

That part of the Canadian character comes out in civilian ways when we face natural disasters — such as the devastation of the fires in British Columbia or the destruction of Hurricane Juan on our eastern coast. My visit to Kelowna and Kamloops after the devastating fires confirmed to me that Canadians, even in

distress and loss, think of others. Many assured me that their situations were not as bad as their neighbours' and were more concerned about how others would cope.

It is this ability to look at the needs of others, to feel compassion for their suffering as part of our own, which speaks to the best of us as Canadians. I think this comes from the fact that we have a society that is caring, in which Aboriginals, Francophones, Anglophones — and immigrants from all over the world — play a significant part. Our history has prepared us to be innovative in the modern world, where diversity counts for so much.

I preside over citizenship ceremonies across this country whenever I can, most recently in Saskatoon 10 days ago. But whether it's in Saint John, Quebec City, Ottawa, Calgary, I speak to our newest Canadians with optimism. Because I know that, as they look around them, they will see examples of what it is like to live the truly Canadian life, to accept and be accepted, to understand and be understood.

When we look around us at Canada today, we see many strengths, many achievements — a society with an enviable quality of life and so much potential, so much talent.

We can build on these strengths to expand our horizons and enlarge our ambitions.

Canadians have already taken up that challenge. They have embraced change with a new confidence. Canadians know who they are and what they want. They want a government that helps shape that course, that leads the way — and that also engages them in building the future.

We want governments to reflect our values in the actions they take. This includes living within our means; investing as we can afford; and looking to the future.

Canadians want their government to do more than just settle for the status quo. They want a government that can lead change, develop a national consensus on common goals and have the wisdom to help all of us achieve them.

The goals of the Government of Canada are clear.

We want a Canada with strong social foundations, where people are treated with dignity, where they are given a hand when needed, where no one is left behind. Where Canadians — families and communities — have the tools to find local solutions for local problems.

We want a strong economy for the 21st century, with well-paying and meaningful work; ready at the forefront of the next big technological revolution; and built on a solid fiscal foundation.

We want for Canada a role of pride and influence in the world, where we speak with an independent voice, bringing distinctive Canadian values to international affairs. It is time to take our place, meet our responsibilities, carry our weight.

Today the Government is proposing an ambitious agenda to set our country on this path. An agenda that should be measured and judged by the goals we have set and by the resolve and constancy by which they are pursued.

Achievements of worth and permanence take time. But that is no excuse for inaction. The Government is committed to making the down payments needed now and to build consistently on these steps as resources permit. So that, a decade hence, we will see that today we made the right choices for the country.

This Speech from the Throne marks the start of a new government; a new agenda; a new way of working.

It marks a renewal, built on partnership, opportunity, achievement — and the real engagement of Canadians.

## **CHANGING THE WAY THINGS WORK IN OTTAWA**

The path to achievement begins with making sure that Canadians believe their government, so that they can believe *in* government.

We must re-engage citizens in Canada's political life. And this has to begin in the place where it should mean the most — in Parliament — by making Parliament work better. That means reconnecting citizens with their Members of Parliament.

That means a new partnership with provinces and territories, focused on the interests of Canadians. That also means greater transparency, ethical standards, and financial accountability in how we govern.

The Government of Canada is determined to return Parliament to the centre of national debate and decision making and to restore the public's faith and trust in the integrity and good management of government.

To that end, it will, as a first step, immediately table in Parliament an action plan for democratic reform.

This will include significantly more free votes, so that Members can represent the views of their constituents as they see fit.

This will include an enhanced role for Members to shape laws.

An enhanced role for Parliamentary Committees, so that Members can hold the Government to greater account — and can play a key role in reviewing senior appointments.

A more active role for Parliamentary Secretaries, for greater engagement between the Government and Parliament and with Canadians.

Significantly enhancing the role of all MPs will make Parliament what it was intended to be — a place where Canadians can see and hear their views debated and their interests heard. In short, a place where they can have an influence on the policies that affect their lives.

## **RESTORING TRUST AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

Democratic renewal must also restore trust. Too many Canadians are alienated from their governments. This must be reversed.

Canadians want the Government of Canada to do better in meeting ethical standards. That is why, as one of its first acts, the Government enhanced the ethics code for all federal public office holders. And that is also why the Government will ask Parliament to immediately reinstate and adopt legislation establishing an independent Ethics Commissioner reporting to Parliament and an Ethics Officer for the Senate.

And this is why the Government created a new agency for continuing excellence in public service. A professional, non-partisan public service — drawing on the talents and commitment of Canadians from every region — is a source of strength and advantage. Our public servants have an important role in this agenda of change. They want to improve how we govern. Canadians deserve the best public service possible — and our agenda demands it.

Democratic renewal means that government programs deliver on objectives, that they deliver what matters in people's lives. Canadians expect government to respect their tax dollars. They want to have the confidence that public money — their money — is wisely spent.

To this end, the Government is launching an ongoing process of expenditure review, overseen by a new Committee of Cabinet. This will ensure that spending reflects priorities and that every tax dollar is invested with care to achieve results for Canadians.

## **A STRONGER RELATIONSHIP**

Democratic renewal means opening the doors in Ottawa to the voices of our provinces and territories — all our regions — and adopting new ways of working together on behalf of Canadians.

Jurisdiction must be respected. But Canadians do not go about their daily lives worried about which jurisdiction does this or that. They expect, rightly, that their governments will co-operate in common purpose for the common good — each working from its strength. They expect them to just get on with the job.

That is why the Government is determined to put relations with provinces and territories on a more constructive footing.

## STRENGTHENING CANADA'S SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS

Changing the way things work in Government will help all Canadians to achieve their goals, starting with strengthening Canada's social foundations.

That means ensuring that all Canadians have the opportunity to develop and use skills and knowledge to their fullest. It means removing barriers to opportunity. It means building on the fundamental fairness of Canadians. Because our enormous good fortune demands nothing less.

This philosophy is given concrete expression in our system of universal health care; in social programs that seek to level the playing field for everyone; in programs to provide our seniors with income assistance and care when needed; in our openness to immigrants and refugees and abhorrence of racism; in our commitment to gender equality; in measures to better the opportunities for Aboriginal Canadians.

### **PARTNERSHIP FOR A HEALTHY CANADA**

The Government's commitment to health care rests on one fundamental tenet: that every Canadian have timely access to quality care, regardless of income or geography — access when they need it.

The Government is committed to this goal: universal, high-quality, publicly funded health care, consistent with the principles of medicare, as set out in the Canada Health Act.

The length of waiting times for the most important diagnoses and treatments is a litmus test of our health care system. These waiting times must be reduced.

This will require fundamental reform and improvement in the facilities and procedures of the entire health care system.

But there is much we can do right now.



The Prime Minister announced on Friday that the Government of Canada has determined that, without going into deficit, it will now be able to provide a further \$2 billion health-care transfer to the provinces and territories this year. Funds to help reduce waiting times; to improve access to diagnostic services; to provide for more doctors and more nurses.

Looking forward, the Government will work with its provincial and territorial partners on the necessary reforms and long-term sustainability of the health system. And it will support the Health Council in the development of information on which waiting-time objectives can be set, and by which Canadians can judge progress toward them.

Canadians also want to be protected from emerging threats to their health, from global epidemics to contaminated water. Safeguarding the health of Canadians is a top priority of this Government.

The shock of SARS demonstrated vividly our vulnerability to infectious diseases that may be incubated anywhere on earth.

Diseases such as SARS and the recent avian flu pose threats which increased global mobility can only make worse.

The Government will therefore take the lead in establishing a strong and responsive public health system, starting with a new Canada Public Health Agency that will ensure that Canada is linked, both nationally and globally, in a network for disease control and emergency response.

The Government will also appoint a new Chief Public Health Officer for Canada — and undertake a much-needed overhaul of federal health protection through a Canada Health Protection Act.

Strengthening our social foundations also means improving the overall health of Canadians — starting with health promotion to help reduce the incidence of avoidable disease. The Government will work with all of its partners to that end, following the age-old prescription that prevention is the best cure.

## CARING FOR OUR CHILDREN

The future of our children is, quite literally, Canada's future.

Science teaches that the early years can shape — or limit — one's future, that early and effective intervention can have enduring benefits.

Governments are not parents, but they do have a role to play in helping to make sure that families get the supports and tools that they need and in protecting children from exploitation and abuse.

We must ensure that every child gets the best possible start in life; that all of Canada's children enter school ready to learn; that we protect their health, their happiness, and their freedom to grow in mind and in body without fear. These are the foundations of healthy early childhood development.

That is the goal. And there are important steps we can take now — down payments on an enduring commitment.

First, in co-operation with the provinces and territories, the Government will accelerate initiatives under the existing Multilateral Framework for Early Learning and Child Care, which means more quality child care more quickly.

Second, to help communities identify children whose readiness to learn is at risk, the Government will extend its successful community pilot project, Understanding the Early Years, to at least 100 communities. Communities themselves can do much for their children with the right knowledge and tools.

Third, the Government will do more to ensure the safety of children through a strategy to counter sexual exploitation of children on the Internet and by reinstating child protection legislation.

## **CREATING OPPORTUNITY FOR CANADIANS WITH DISABILITIES**

Many Canadians with disabilities are ready to contribute but confront difficult obstacles in the workplace and in their communities. And too often, families are left on their own to care for a severely disabled relative. Here too, the Government of Canada has a role.

We want a Canada in which citizens with disabilities have the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from Canada's prosperity — as learners, workers, volunteers, and family members.

Canada cannot afford to squander the talents of people with disabilities or turn its back on those who seek to provide care and a life of dignity for family members with severe disabilities.

The Government will start by working with the provinces and territories to fill the gaps in education and skills development and in workplace supports and workplace accommodation for people with disabilities.

It will lead by example in supporting the hiring, accommodation and retention of Canadians with disabilities in the Government of Canada — the nation's largest employer — and in federally regulated industries.

The Government will also improve the fairness of the tax system for people with disabilities, and their supporting families, based on the findings of the Advisory Committee on Tax Measures, which will report this fall and will implement early actions in areas of priority.

## **ABORIGINAL CANADIANS**

Aboriginal Canadians have not fully shared in our nation's good fortune. While some progress has been made, the conditions in far too many Aboriginal communities can only be described as shameful. This offends our values. It is in our collective interest to turn the corner. And we must start now.

Our goal is to see Aboriginal children get a better start in life as a foundation for greater progress in acquiring the education and work-force skills needed to succeed.

Our goal is to see real economic opportunities for Aboriginal individuals and communities.

To see Aboriginal Canadians participating fully in national life, on the basis of historic rights and agreements — with greater economic self-reliance, a better quality of life.

The Government of Canada will work with First Nations to improve governance in their communities — to enhance transparency and accountability — because this is the prerequisite to effective self-government and economic development. Aboriginal leadership is committed to this end and rapid progress is essential.

In order to support governance capacity in Aboriginal communities and to enhance effective dialogue, the Government will, in co-operation with First Nations, establish an independent Centre for First Nations Government.

The Government will also focus on education and skills development, because this is a prerequisite to individual opportunity and full participation. To pursue this goal, the Government will work with provinces and territories and Aboriginal partners in a renewed Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy.

Too often, the needs of Aboriginal people off reserve are caught up in jurisdictional wrangling. These issues cannot deter us. The Government of Canada will work with its partners on practical solutions to help Aboriginal people respond to the unique challenges they face. To this end, the Government will expand the successful Urban Aboriginal Strategy with willing provinces and municipalities.

The Government will also engage other levels of government and Métis leadership on the place of the Métis in its policies.

The Government is committed to a more coherent approach to Aboriginal issues. To focus this effort, it has established a new Cabinet Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister; a Parliamentary Secretary; and an Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat in the Privy Council Office.

## **GREAT PLACES TO LIVE — A NEW DEAL FOR COMMUNITIES**

Our communities, our towns, our cities are key to our social goals and our economic competitiveness. Large and small, rural and urban, Canada's communities are facing new challenges, often without sufficient resources or the tools they need.

Canada depends on communities that can attract the best talent and compete for investment as vibrant centres of commerce, learning, and culture. We want communities that provide affordable housing, good transit, quality health care, excellent schools, safe neighbourhoods, and abundant green spaces.

To this end, the Government of Canada is committed to a new deal for Canada's municipalities.

A new deal that targets the infrastructure needed to support quality of life and sustainable growth.

A new deal that helps our communities become more dynamic, more culturally rich, more cohesive, and partners in strengthening Canada's social foundations.

A new deal that delivers reliable, predictable and long-term funding.

Therefore, the Government will work with provinces to share with municipalities a portion of gas tax revenues or to determine other fiscal mechanisms which achieve the same goals.

This will take time and the agreement of other governments. But the Government of Canada is prepared now, as a down payment, to act in its own jurisdiction by providing all municipalities with full relief from the portion of the Goods and Services Tax they now pay.

Over the next decade, this will provide Canada's municipalities with approximately \$7 billion of stable new funding to help meet critical priorities.

The Government will also move to quickly commit funds within our existing infrastructure programs, so that our partners can plan properly.

Together, these are real and ongoing investments in urban transit, affordable housing, clean water, and good roads. Canada's municipalities asked for this. The Government has acted.

Canada's municipalities can play a crucial role in helping the Government meet its national priorities — for the integration of immigrants, for opportunities for Aboriginal Canadians living in urban centres, for tackling homelessness, and for emergency preparedness and response. The new deal means that city hall has a real seat at the table of national change.

And the Government will help communities to help themselves.

One of the best ways to do this is to get behind the remarkable people who are applying entrepreneurial skills, not for profit, but rather to enhance the social and environmental conditions in our communities right across Canada.

These new approaches to community development — sometimes referred to as the “social economy” — are producing more and more success stories about a turn around in individual lives and distressed neighbourhoods — communities working to combat homelessness, address poverty and clean up the environment.

The Government of Canada wants to support those engaged in this entrepreneurial social movement. It will increase their access to resources and tools. The Government will, for example, work to widen the scope of programs currently available to small and medium-sized enterprises to include social enterprises.

The voluntary sector and the millions of Canadian volunteers are essential contributors to the quality, fairness and vitality of our communities. The Government will continue to advance the Voluntary Sector Initiative, to strengthen the capacity and voice of philanthropic and charitable organizations and to mobilize volunteers.

Another defining characteristic of our communities and of our reputation around the world is the vitality and excellence of our cultural life. Canada's artists and cultural enterprises are among our best ambassadors, as well as being an increasingly dynamic element of the knowledge economy. Their work holds a mirror on our society and builds a legacy for future generations.

The Government will work with parliamentarians to modernize our arts and culture policies and federal cultural institutions to bring to bear the new technological possibilities of the digital age and to reflect Canada's regional diversity and multiculturalism.

Linguistic duality is at the heart of our identity. It is our image in the world. It opens doors for us.

The Government will nurture this asset, which benefits all Canadians. It will ensure that minority language communities have the tools that enable their members to fully contribute to the development of Canadian society.

## BUILDING A 21ST CENTURY ECONOMY

A strong economy, built to succeed in the 21st century, is the pre-condition to fulfilling our aspirations, as a nation and as individuals.

A nation's social and economic goals are inseparable. A stronger economy requires stronger social foundations. And if we want to build a fairer, more equitable society, we need a stronger economy.

Where do we want to be a decade from now?

We want a Canada that is a world leader in developing and applying the path-breaking technologies of the 21st century — biotechnology, environmental technology, information and communications technologies, health technologies, and nanotechnology. Applying these capabilities to all sectors to build globally competitive firms, from start-ups to multinationals. And creating high-quality jobs that will meet the ambitions of young Canadians — and keep them in this country, working to build an even greater Canada.

We foresee a Canada that is a magnet for capital and entrepreneurs from around the world.

A Canada where the increasing number of women entrepreneurs have every opportunity to succeed and contribute a vital new dimension to our economy.

A Canada built on innovation with world-class research universities, smart regulation and innovative financing, all combining to make Canada a global leader in the commercialization of bright ideas.

A Canada where the benefits of the 21st century economy are being reaped from coast to coast to coast — on our farms, in our fishing, forest, and mining industries, and in our rural communities where modern communications are helping to surmount the barrier of distance.

This will be achieved primarily through the efforts of Canadians themselves. But government has an essential enabling role.

A sound macroeconomic environment is fundamental. To ensure that the hard-won gains of the past decade are never squandered, the Government of Canada is unalterably committed to fiscal prudence, as evidenced by annual balanced budgets and steady reduction in the debt relative to the size of the economy. This Government will not spend itself into deficit.

Canada is a trading nation. And a 21st century economy is an economy open to the world. Canadian goods, services, capital, people, and knowledge must be able to reach international markets.

There are growing opportunities for Canadian exporters and investors to complement our enormously successful relationship with the United States by building closer economic ties with other regions of the world. In particular, more attention will be focused on such newly emerging economic giants as China, India, and Brazil.



## LIFELONG LEARNING

Investing in people will be Canada's most important economic investment.

The Government's goal is to ensure that a lack of financial resources will not be allowed to deny, to those with the motivation and capacity, the opportunity to learn and aspire to excellence in pursuing a skilled trade, a community college diploma, or university degree.

To advance this objective, the Government of Canada will work with provinces and territories to modernize the Canada Student Loans Program to help overcome financial barriers to post-secondary education and training. It will update and improve grants and loans to increase access for middle- and low-income families and their children and to reflect the rising cost of education.

Loan limits will be increased, in recognition of the rising cost of education.

Eligible expenses will be broadened to include the new essentials, such as computers.

Family income thresholds will be raised to improve access for middle income families, squeezed by rising costs.

Measures will be taken to improve loan terms for part-time students.

But the answer to improved access must go beyond simply more generous loans, because a growing debt load poses its own limits, both psychologically and financially.

The Government will therefore provide a new grant for low-income students, to cover a portion of the tuition cost of the first year of post-secondary education.

More is also needed to encourage greater savings by families for their children's education, starting from the earliest years of life. The Registered Education Savings Plan and associated savings grant have been extraordinarily successful stimulants, but participation by lower income families — often those who could

most benefit — has been disappointingly low. The Government will therefore create new incentives that truly work to encourage low-income families to begin investing, right from the birth of their children, for their long-term education.

To meet the challenges of the new economy, Canada's workers must have the opportunity to upgrade their skills, to improve their literacy, to learn on the job, to move onto the path of lifelong learning.

The Government will therefore refine and enhance its programs to encourage skills upgrading, in concert with sector councils, unions, and business.

The Government will also work with provinces to update labour market programming to better reflect the realities of work in the 21st century, such as the growth of self-employment and the need for continuous upgrading of skills.

We will also deepen the pool of Canada's talent and skills by ensuring more successful integration of new immigrants into the economy and into communities. Immigrants have helped to build Canada from its inception and will be key to our future prosperity. The Government will do its part to ensure speedier recognition of foreign credentials and prior work experience. It will also implement measures to inform prospective immigrants and encourage the acquisition of necessary credentials before they arrive in Canada.

## **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Canadian entrepreneurs have made great strides in building the innovative, technology-enabled economy needed to succeed in the years ahead. The Government of Canada has helped lay the foundation for even greater success with very substantial investments in basic research — \$13 billion since 1997.

These investments are ensuring a continued flow of basic knowledge and highly trained people on which our future economic success depends.

Now we must do much more to ensure that our knowledge investment is converted to commercial success. We need to do more to get our ideas and innovations out of our minds and into the marketplace.

Our small, innovative firms face two key obstacles — access to adequate early-stage financing; and the capacity to conduct the research and development needed to commercialize their ideas and really grow their business.

The Government will help to overcome these obstacles — building, for example, on the venture financing capabilities of the Business Development Bank.

The Government will create access to capital for the commercialization of science in areas where we can be among the world leaders — in environment, in health, in biotechnology, and in nanotechnology.

The Government will also build on the experience and nationwide reach of the National Research Council to help small firms bridge the commercialization gap by providing the research and expertise that small business cannot develop on its own.

To help integrate and focus these efforts, Canada's new National Science Advisor will re-engage universities, colleges, and enterprise in a truly national science agenda.

## **REGIONAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

The 21st century economy promises opportunity for all parts of Canada. The objective of the Government is to ensure that every region of the country has the opportunity to move forward, socially and economically, on a rising tide of progress. As we share opportunity, so too will we share prosperity.

The Government therefore remains committed to supporting economic development through the regional agencies where the focus must be on strengthening the sinews of an economy for the 21st century, building on indigenous strength.

The Government will place increased emphasis on opportunities to add greater value to natural resources through application of advanced technology and know-how; on opportunities to develop Canada's energy resources and be a leader in environmental stewardship; and on opportunities to maximize the potential of our vast coastal and offshore areas through a new Oceans Action Plan.

It will develop a Northern strategy, ensuring that economic development related to energy and mining is brought on stream in partnership with Northern Canadians, based on stewardship of our most fragile northern ecosystems.

The Government is dedicated to Canada's farm economy and to taking the steps necessary to safeguard access to international markets and to ensure that farmers are not left to bear alone the consequences of circumstances beyond their control. It is also committed to fostering a technologically advanced agricultural sector with the supporting infrastructure of transportation and applied science to make the competitiveness of Canadian farmers and the safety of our food second to none in world markets.

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Safeguarding our natural environment — in the here and now, and for generations to come — is one of the great responsibilities of citizens and governments in the 21st century.

The tide of global population and the imperatives of economic development — no longer restricted to the small minority of rich countries — make sustainable development a challenge of national and global magnitude.

Canadians, as stewards of vast geography and abundant resources, feel a keen sense of responsibility to help the world meet the environmental challenge.

And in so doing, to show how this challenge can be turned to advantage through leadership in “green technologies”; through more energy-efficient transportation and housing; and through non-polluting industrial processes. All of which will stimulate innovation, new market opportunities, and cleaner communities.

This spirit will animate Canada's approach to climate change.

Halting the increasingly damaging impact of human activity on climate is a project of global scale and decades duration.

The Government of Canada will respect its commitments to the Kyoto accord on climate change in a way that produces long-term and enduring results while maintaining a strong and growing economy. It will do so by developing an equitable national plan, in partnership with provincial and territorial governments and other stakeholders.

We have begun, and we will persevere. And we will go beyond Kyoto to strengthen our environmental stewardship.

First, the Government will begin by putting its own house in order. It will undertake a 10-year, \$3.5 billion program to clean up contaminated sites for which the Government is responsible. And the Government of Canada will augment this with a \$500 million program of similar duration to do its part in the remediation of certain other sites, notably the Sydney tar ponds.

Second, the Government will intensify its commitment to clean air and clean water. We will engage the United States on trans-boundary issues and the provinces to achieve more stringent national guidelines on air and water quality. And we are committing the resources needed to ensure safe drinking water in First Nations' communities.

Third, building on recommendations of the National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy, the Government will start incorporating key indicators on clean water, clean air, and emissions reduction into its decision making.

Fourth, the Government will increase the resources to support innovative environmental technologies and further encourage their commercialization.

Fifth, we will engage Canadians directly. Our One Tonne Challenge aims to raise awareness and provide Canadians with information on how their individual consumption choices contribute to the emissions that drive climate change. The objective — the challenge — is to reduce emissions by 1,000 kilograms per person, per year. Because environmental stewardship must be everybody's responsibility.

## CANADA'S ROLE IN THE WORLD

Canadians are uniquely positioned for the new global realities — open to the world, comfortable with the interdependence of nations, aware of our global responsibilities.

Canadians want their country to play a distinctive and independent role in making the world more secure, more peaceful, more co-operative, more open. They want to see Canada's place of pride and influence in the world restored.

What kind of world do we want to see a decade from now?

We want to see the benefits of global interdependence spread more fairly throughout the world.

We want agreement on new rules governing international actions when a government fails to protect its own people from tyranny and oppression.

We want to see multilateral institutions that work. No one nation can manage the consequences of global interdependence on its own.

We want to see greater collaboration among nations to ensure that economic policies go hand in hand with stronger social programs to alleviate hunger, poverty, and disease, and to help to raise the standards of living in developing countries.

Canada can contribute to achieving these goals.

We can play a distinctive role based on our values — the rule of law, liberty, democracy, equality of opportunity, and fairness. As others have said: the world needs more Canada.

Canada can make a difference and we can more than carry our weight. We need to work better, to work smarter, in diplomacy, in development, in defence and in international trade — all of which have become profoundly interdependent and are increasingly touching Canadians in their daily lives.

To guide us forward in this, the Government has launched an integrated review of its international policies — the first such review in a decade of change.

The review will be completed this autumn and then considered by a parliamentary committee, where Canadians will have the opportunity to make their views known.

Some things, however, need not wait for the review — because they are urgently needed, or because the right course of action is already clear.

There is a moral imperative to do all we can to make medical treatment accessible to the untold millions suffering from deadly infectious diseases, notably HIV/AIDS, particularly in the poorest countries of Africa. The Government of Canada will therefore proceed with legislation to enable the provision of generic drugs to developing countries.

Canada's obligation does not stop there. We are a knowledge-rich country. We must apply more of our research and science to help address the most pressing problems of developing countries.

The Government will continue its leadership in the creation of a new international instrument on cultural diversity, participate actively in la Francophonie, and promote and disseminate our cultural products and works around the world.

And in 2010, the eyes of the world will be on Canada as Vancouver and Whistler host the Winter Olympics, an opportunity to inspire Canadian pride and achievement — and an opportunity to reinforce participation in sport by Canadians, at the highest level and in our communities.

Our foreign policy objectives require a meaningful capacity to contribute militarily in support of collective efforts to safeguard international peace and security. Our men and women in uniform put their lives on the line for us when they participate in operations abroad — as we were reminded tragically only last week. All Canadians support them and their families. We must ensure that they have the equipment and training to do the job.

To this end, the Government will make immediate investments in key capital equipment, such as new armoured vehicles and replacements for the Sea King helicopters.

There is no role more fundamental for government than the protection of its citizens.

That is why the Government has already established the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness and appointed a National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister. It has also established the Cabinet Committee on Security, Public Health and Emergencies and the new Canada Border Services Agency.

Given the responsibility to address new threats, such as non-state terrorism, and to ensure effective emergency management, the Government will develop, with its domestic partners, Canada's first national security policy. This will publicly set forth the principles that will guide the Government's actions and serve as a blueprint for effectively securing Canada in a way that strengthens the open nature of our society.

Canada and the United States are connected not only by the shared geography of North America and by hugely beneficial trade and investment flows — the largest bilateral economic relationship in the world — but also by ties of friendship and family, by commonly held democratic values, and by shared interests and responsibilities.

The Government is therefore committed to a new, more sophisticated approach to this unique relationship.

To ensure a border that is open and effective in handling the volumes of people, goods, and services flowing to and from our economies, the security concerns of both sides must be respected.

Building on the success of the Smart Borders initiative, the Government will engage with the United States to further strengthen North American security while facilitating the flow of commerce and travellers. It will also work toward infrastructure investments at key trade corridors to ensure that we can facilitate the expanding trade between our countries.



## CONCLUSION

Canada and Canadians are confidently positioned to achieve great things in the years ahead.

We have set out measured steps consistent with our means. An ambitious agenda for an ambitious country.

*Members of the House of Commons:*

You will be asked to appropriate the funds required to carry out the services and expenditures authorized by Parliament.

*Honourable Members of the Senate and Members of the House of Commons:*

As you carry out your duties and exercise your responsibilities, may you be guided by Divine Providence.