



CANADA AND THE WORLD OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

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In an increasingly inter-connected twenty-first century world, the way in which Canada is perceived outside her borders should reflect the thoughts, aspirations, and values of the diverse multicultural, multilingual, multi-religious, and multidimensional reality within her borders. There is common agreement, backed by a number of surveys over the years, that our collective outlook can be justly described as one of social compassion backed by economic durability.

Canadians agree that we have an intrinsic responsibility to be actively involved in the world. And, irrespective of political leadership or global financial circumstances, best results are rightly generated when Canada's roles, goals or activities at home and abroad balance those collective aspirations with our resource capacity in confronting the challenges of an evolving world.

Good domestic policy makes for good foreign policy. Over the next five years, Canada's priorities for international engagement should be shaped by the following themes:

- the projection of Canadian values and culture;
- the improved application of our legal framework;
- the development of sensible communities in the new urban environment.

Ultimately, best results will come about through effective citizen ownership and continuous engagement amongst a broad spectrum of Canadians including individuals and groups, academia, legislators, and civil society stakeholders.



Canadian Values and Culture

Over the next five years, the projection of Canadian values and culture will continue to strengthen our capacity to influence desired outcomes around the world.

Canada, a microcosm of the world, entered the twenty-first century with enormous advantages. In an era of globalization, our multicultural makeup, reflecting citizens with roots in almost every country, remains a particular asset. Through years of immigration, we have developed and embraced a Canadian way of living together, resolving differences, reasoning together, and creating that which the United Nations Human Index Reports describes as quite simply one of the best countries in the world in which to live. Though our reality remains imperfect with, for example, the unresolved national unity question, our day-to-day polity reflects an instinctive appreciation of fundamental issues like the human side of globalization, human security, cultural diversity, and human rights.

But, in one of the most comprehensive foreign policy review exercises in recent history, the 1995 Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) report, *Canada in the World*, offers that "...our unity will spring from pride in our civic nationality—based on shared values and tolerance, respect for the rule of law, and thoughtful compromise." The report asserts the projection of Canadian values and culture as a matter of prime national interest; and includes a broad range of political, social, and economic factors such as democratic governance; or economic goals nuanced by sustainable development.

On the world stage, Canada's history as a non-colonizing power and purveyor of constructive multilateralism, and our profile in international peacekeeping, lends credibility and distinguishes us among nations. Those factors help form the positive perception of Canada held by foreign governments, which undoubtedly enhances the likelihood of success in relevant pursuits. Those Canadian values came to bear in Canada's role in the founding and leading of multilateral fora such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United Nations (UN), the World Bank, or the World Trade Organization (WTO); or the manner in which we've staked our positions on, for example, past treaties on land mines or the International Criminal Court; or our role in the global security arena through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and our positions on Iraq, Afghanistan, or China's human rights record.

And, as we enter a new era of global discourse towards new expanded-member multilateral approaches, such as the G20, the projection of Canadian culture and values can help channel international cohesion and solidarity in confronting common problems and threats. In essence, Canada, with much fewer negative associations than other countries, is therefore more likely to be effective in promoting democracy and economic development, ameliorating conflict, or implementing sustainable economic aid and trade constructs that may help to reduce the causes of violence in conflict-prone areas such as the Middle East, Africa, and South America. Canada also stands to gain in many ways from such actions, including the development of opportunities for Canadian-based exporters.



But, our nation-building experience also forces the responsibility of leadership on a number of other non-economic fronts—for example, increased engagement along the path of how we move from rhetorical embrace of the Millennium Development Goals to a consensus on what needs to be done to achieve them. And, in a domain of particular interest—the welfare of children—how can we develop a healthier more global sense of awareness?

Our compassionate values urge that, even as we tackle the myriad issues and challenges around children in the Canadian metropolitan and suburban environments, our enhanced outlook must also incorporate the tragedy of child soldiers, the despair of child labourers, the plight of disabled children and street children, and the horror of child sexual exploitation—all within our global purview.

Our compassionate values will form our actions on the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, the achievement of basic education for all, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, and forming global partnerships for development. Canada will lead in defining and pursuing the “global yardstick” against which the world can measure progress in key areas.

Of course, over the next five years, these actions call for an expanded outlook and a framework of measurement through which we can strategize and channel our efforts. This will involve a wide variety of stakeholders from the non-governmental, voluntary, public, and private sectors.

Ultimately, more so than most others, Canadians are best positioned to fine-tune and implement approaches that lend not only to the excellence of Canada, but also to the well-being of our world.

Better Application of Canada’s Legal Framework

Over the next five years, the improved application of Canada’s progressive framework of laws will bolster our capacity to influence desired outcomes around the world.

It can be argued that Canada leads the developed world in its legislative efforts to ensure equality to its citizens. Over the past forty-odd years, a solid legal framework has been established that integrates a forceful collection of laws and policies. Co-existing with Canada’s 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms is the Canadian Human Rights Act, the Canadian Bill of Rights, the Employment Equity Act, the Official Languages Act, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, and the Citizenship Act.

It is also important to note that Canada is party to several international human rights instruments which call on governments “to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, the full and equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.”



Our framework of legislation not only ensures equality under the law but also seeks to find that fine balance between individual and collective rights. And it is from this reality that, globally, we draw the moral authority to champion the fight on a number of issues of discrimination and racial intolerance beyond our borders and around the world.

Canadians draw much pride from our sense of international leadership in this area. We tell others that we value our diversity, and how it lends to our success as a nation, and we talk of our continued commitment to build a society that can move beyond tolerance to respect.

So, over the next five years, how can change be brought about in the evolving context of Canadian society? Firstly, it requires all Canadians—individual citizens, civil society, and levels of government—to work together. It requires increased dialogue and the building of constructive partnerships between governments and civil society. It calls for government departments and agencies to work together to implement new and existing policies, programs, and activities to address priority issues.

But it can't stop there. Progressive partnerships between government and ethno-cultural community groups need to be developed to ensure that policies and programs address systemic inequities and reflect the needs of an increasingly multicultural population. Partnerships must also be formed between government and employers and associations, unions, and other stakeholders, to identify and address systemic barriers in the workplace. Law enforcement officers have to be more consistent in their approach across Canada to better serve ethno-racial communities. At the same time, these partnerships will help generate a tested body of knowledge and expertise that can be shared with other countries.

It was Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who cautioned in 1963 that, "Law and order exist for the purpose of establishing Justice and...when they fail in this purpose they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress." Over the next five years, through enhanced dialogue and decisive action to mitigate the serious lack of knowledge about the impact of laws and policies, significant gains can be made along the path of building Canada as a truly inclusive society where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. Building social equity will be an ongoing responsibility.

Ultimately, by working to perfect the application of our own legal framework, Canada is better positioned to lead by example, sharing the best practices gathered with and within both domestic and international communities. This is how we build the just society that we deserve in Canada.

Sensible Communities in the New Urban Environment

Over the next five years, new urban environment themes will foster more responsive, innovative Canadian communities, and a body of thinking that lends to Canada's position in the world.



The “new urban environment” approach engages the complex challenges and opportunities for diverse groups of people in an increasingly urbanized world. It injects issues of social justice, equity, family, neighbourhood, and individual development into the urban planning landscape. It can also include matters of affordable housing, employment, safety, transportation, social welfare, and belonging.

At large, urban environments are vibrant locations, sites of human creativity and resilience, cultural dynamism, and economic energy. They are politically rich and growing larger, expanding in populations of ethnic and linguistic diversity, and present visible opportunities for observing social transformation in processes of civic participation, as well as emerging possibilities for sustainable futures.

But educational achievement gaps, gross poverty, discrimination, unequal access to resources, homelessness, and a host of other social ills continue to have conspicuously negative effects on the achievement of full life chances for many residents of our cities—young and old alike. Theorists explain that urban factors can influence individual obedience to social rules, and that psychological pressure develops in more densely populated areas. As part of a comprehensive functional approach, better planning and deployment of individual space can make a difference.

In five years, new urban environment learnings will begin to form the infrastructure for central nodes in world markets. Practitioners will increasingly master a host of issues including maximizing accessibility of an area to people with different abilities, implementing urban design schemes to dissuade criminal behaviour, or “traffic calming” or “pedestrianisation” as ways of making urban life more pleasant.

The school system will be enhanced as a key to this dynamic environment, serving as a critical centre where children, youth, and families, in a multiplicity of social differences, gather together to learn, imagine, and realize our interdependent futures.

For example, the new urban environment practitioners take into account the important role that the community plays in the potential academic achievement of children, and how to think about school improvement in terms of creating positive relationships between schools and the communities that they serve. The role of teachers is vital in seeking out ways to engage with communities and to work with parents, activists, social service providers, recreation and healthcare professionals, and employment counsellors to link theory and research to local concerns and issues in order to develop an inclusive curriculum in their classrooms.

New urban environment themes also form a basis for Canada’s leadership in addressing the inordinate impact of climate change on Aboriginal peoples whose livelihood depends on the land, water, and other natural resources. We would make new investments to find new ways to maintain and protect aspects of the Aboriginal peoples’ traditional and subsistence ways of life. This could include the integration of climate change into existing planning processes,



taking into account variables like knowledge systems, culture, social values, spirituality, and ecosystems.

Around the world, Canada will find numerous opportunities to share its experience. For example, in the rebuilding of areas devastated by war or invasion, like Afghanistan or Iraq, some appreciation may be borne for Canada's insights on a healthy social ecology, the restoration of natural systems, efficient land use, less pollution and waste, good housing and living environments, community involvement, and the preservation of local culture.

Conclusion

Over the next five years, the projection of Canadian values and culture, the improved application of our legal framework, and the development of sensible communities in the new urban environment can help form Canada's position as a world leader.

Canada's unique history as a non-colonizing power, champion of constructive multilateralism, and effective international mediator underpins an important and distinctive role among nations new and old. Our global influence will be further strengthened as we take steps domestically to improve consistency in the application of our robust framework of legislation. And, in an age where information is the currency of the realm, the new urban environment positions Canada as a leader in the complex challenges and opportunities for diverse groups of people in an increasingly urbanized world.

On the world stage, Canada will further solidify our respected position as a leader amongst open, advanced societies, backed by increased legitimization in line with our actions along the themes of good governance, health, and education—particularly on issues related to children. And Canada will offer examples to developing countries that are increasingly taking charge of their own development, providing a context where they identify their own priorities and create their own plans to implement and achieve them.

Canada will continue to work just as well within the new so-called Group of 20 countries, as it did in the G8. The new expanded membership better ensures that global issues beyond economic or financial imperatives are engaged at the highest levels—issues of poverty, climate change, war, and disease.

Already, countless Canadian individuals, NGOs, universities, professional associations, cooperatives, governments, and companies are already doing their part to help create the conditions in Canada and around the world in which people are better able—through their own efforts—to improve their lives and those of their families and communities. Through this, we better ensure that Canada will continue to do its fair share for the world, maintaining our proud and uniquely Canadian contribution to global governance and prosperity.