

Minister of Foreign Affairs



Ministre des Affaires étrangères

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0G2

April, 1998

Dear Fellow Citizens,

On November 6, The 1997 National Forum Report was tabled in Parliament. As you know, the National Forum on Canada's International Relations each year does a wide-ranging consultation on Canadian foreign policy priorities and objectives. This year it was on Asia-Pacific. And, having read the report, I can confirm to you that it has a number of fascinating initiatives to propose.

The Report examines in some detail how Canadians can make a contribution to improving human rights, to opening up the media and promoting sustainable development in Asia-Pacific. It was made available to me prior to the APEC and Peoples' Summit meetings and helped me move forward in my discussions on these issues with Canadians and with my counterparts in Asia-Pacific countries.

What is also important in the report — and I guess it's the message I have been trying to give ever since I became Minister of Foreign Affairs — is that Canada should use all the tools at its disposal. Not simply take one or two items and say "that is good enough", but look at the full array of contacts and exchanges, public and private, and work on a multitude of fronts in order to establish ourselves as truly a major player.

I have also been speaking about public engagement at every opportunity. This means finding the most effective ways to utilize and bring to bear the incredible power of people that we have, in this country and other countries, and begin matching them up.

I would like to thank the workshop and Forum organizers and you fellow citizens, for your hard work and energy, and your public views on issues critical to us here in Canada and to our partners in Asia-Pacific.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lloyd Axworthy".

Lloyd Axworthy
Minister