

Opening Remarks

The symposium was chaired by the Honourable Senator Douglas Roche who began the day's proceedings by reminding the audience of the importance of moving beyond a culture of war to a culture of peace. There is a need for people at all levels of society to work to establish and entrench a culture of peace and especially to advance it through supporting more participatory and people-centred processes. He called attention to the significant progress that has been made in a number of areas, citing the Ottawa Treaty banning anti-personnel land mines; the Treaty of Rome establishing the International Criminal Court that finally ends impunity and establishes accountability for the perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity; and the conclusion of a convention banning the use of child soldiers. Senator Roche made note of Canada's considerable efforts in each of these areas. He also spoke of the need to continue this work by strengthening the capacity of the United Nations (UN) through reforms of the UN Security Council and through the development of a UN Rapid Reaction Force. He closed by noting the critical importance of preventive diplomacy as a crucial element of peacebuilding.

Madam Justice Arbour spoke of the need to think about peacebuilding and reconciliation in concrete terms. She noted the fact that internal wars have tended to be the most devastating for individuals and that such wars are often marked by an extensive array of crimes against vulnerable populations. Such situations often demand an element of retributive justice as part of the process of reconciliation. Despite the local demands for justice, at the international level there continues to be significant resistance to the idea that justice can contribute to the peacebuilding process. This resistance has been combined with a great deal of controversy with respect to the implementation of formal justice.

The International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and Rwanda (ICTR) have served as important laboratories for the application of justice in post-conflict (or ongoing conflict) situations. The Tribunals should, however, be recognized as part of a myriad of international