

We have much in common between our two countries:

- We share the bleakness and majesty of northern landscapes; the disappearance of the sun in winter; the long, hot luxuriant days of summer; and the rich resources and harvests that bless our natural environment. We share, as well, the ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity that enriches our lives but complicates our capacity to achieve common solutions.
- We are both retooling for the next century in a fast-moving and increasingly competitive international environment, recognizing the need to focus on bilateral and global trading relationships.
- We have compatible resource sectors where our know-how can help Russia earn hard currency now, especially in agriculture, minerals, forestry products and oil and gas.
- We have high technology expertise and experience in bridging distances and bringing people together, through state-of-the-art telecommunications, computers and transportation.

In short, we have much to offer Russia in the way of becoming an efficient economy that is able to deliver domestically, as well as to compete in the global marketplace.

But this is not one-way. Russia, for its part, has much to offer Canada -- and the world -- in return. As a permanent member of the Security Council, which Canada and most other countries are not, you have political influence that affects us all. Your leadership on such issues as ending the unspeakable tragedies in the former Yugoslavia will be critical in the coming days. Your scientists and artists, among the best in the world, can share their skills with others.

Canada has always adopted a global perspective. We have traditionally recognized that multilateralism, consensus-building and an effective UN serve the world better than the bipolar rivalry between the United States and the former Soviet Union (FSU). Today, our traditional view has found more favour -- in the Group of Seven leading industrial countries (G-7), at the UN and elsewhere. And there is certainly a full agenda that requires urgent attention.

Just think of the global challenges we all face.