

WHY FOREIGN POLICY MATTERS TO CANADIANS

Canadians have a growing stake in international developments. The food we eat, the air we breathe, and our health, safety, prosperity and quality of life are increasingly affected by what happens beyond our borders. At the same time, much of what we have accomplished at home enables us to contribute to a better world. Though of value in itself, this too is in our interest. A world that is peaceful and prosperous, in which democracy and respect for human rights flourish, is a world of opportunity for Canada and for Canadians.

Our choice is clear: we must be globally active if we are to create the society we want at home. But the anchor for our international reach remains in North America. Not only is this our neighbourhood; our chief partner, the United States, is also the sole superpower, whose role often determines success or failure on issues of concern to us. We cannot take our long-standing relationship with the United States for granted, nor our relationship with Mexico. We must ensure that our approach enables us to work with the United States and Mexico so that North America itself is globally competitive and continues to contribute to international security, prosperity and democratic, sustainable development.

Adaptation is not confined to our international policy. Because the distinction between domestic and international is less meaningful, when we think of international policy we must also think of the domestic implications. The SARS outbreak highlighted how

deeply, widely and quickly an international problem can affect our society, from health to the economy. New policy must consider closely the growing links between what occurs inside and outside our borders, on issues from immigration and human capital development, to fisheries, agriculture and national defence.

If the issues are increasingly interwoven, so too must be Canada's strategies for addressing them. We need greater coordination among the many programs and players in government involved with international issues, and modernization of our international instruments. We will have to work harder in government, and with Canadians, to ensure that we break down silos and promote a coherent, visible Canadian approach, backed with sufficient resources to take action and to get our messages across clearly. This will help to ensure that Canada remains influential on issues of concern in an increasingly competitive world.

Therefore, the sustainability and success of our international policy depends on both leadership by the Government and the active involvement of Canadians. The Government is committed to protecting and advancing the global citizenship of all Canadians, but it cannot be done without their strong involvement.

In the future, the Minister of Foreign Affairs will provide periodic updates that assess recent developments and look ahead, in light of the priorities set out in this document.