

Backgrounder

SECOND ANNUAL NATIONAL FORUM ON CANADA'S INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Process

The Second Annual National Forum on Canada's International Relations is an important dimension of the Government's foreign policy review process. The First National Forum, held in March 1994, contributed to the Government's Foreign Policy Statement issued in February 1995 and to the Government's Defence White Paper issued in December 1994. The Foreign Policy Statement identified three priorities for Canada's foreign policy: the promotion of prosperity and employment, the protection of our security within a stable global framework and the projection of Canadian values and culture abroad. The purpose of the foreign policy review process is to ensure that policy formulation receives public input and that implementation of Canada's foreign policy is subject to ongoing assessment in an era of constant change in the international environment.

Theme

In the context of the G-7 Summit hosted by Canada in Halifax, which addressed key international institutional issues, and in anticipation of the United Nations' 50th anniversary on October 24, it is appropriate for the Second National Forum to focus on Canada's role within the international institutional framework at the cusp of the 21st century. The Forum will provide a valuable opportunity for the Government to seek the advice of Canadians on how international institutions are performing and where changes should be proposed, particularly in light of resource constraints affecting many industrialized nations, including Canada.

Organization

This year's Forum is being organized by a consortium of Toronto institutions active in the foreign policy field. Led by the University of Toronto's Centre for International Studies, this consortium includes the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, the Centre for Strategic Studies, York University, the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research and the Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies. The consortium has worked in close consultation with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the Department of National Defence and the Canadian International Development Agency.