



- the rapid change, and the blurring of borders and dividing lines, brought about by globalization and the information technology revolution;
- the emergence of new types of conflict that threaten human security; and
- the need for new tools and measures to deal with these changes.

## Canada's Role

For Canada, the key issue is to decide where we fit in this changing world: where we can make a difference and where we need to play for ourselves, to promote Canada's interests. These are the sorts of questions that you and other Canadians have been discussing in the context of the National Forum. They are the questions we all face as we head into the next millennium.

In his book *Millennium*, Philippe Fernandez Armesto makes some interesting comparisons between the rapidly approaching turn of the millennium and events around the previous end of millennium, in 1000 AD. In this context, he highlights "...the ability of some groups to decisively influence the rest of mankind by generating and communicating ideas, creating or adapting technology, and undertaking exploration...." In my view, Canada has the potential to be one of these influential actors, who steer the course of events in the 21st century and beyond.

I don't say this from a misplaced sense of national pride, but because of the qualities and capacities Canada has, which suit us well to the new international landscape. We have abundant human resources and political skills. We have learned the art of accommodation in building our own flexible federalism. And we continue to enjoy strong public support for a role for Canada as a constructive, activist international player. The city

of Winnipeg is a case in point. Here we are, in the middle of the continent. Yet as the centre of the grain trade and home of the Wheat Board, Winnipeg has always looked outward. Winnipeggers have always been conscious of the importance of cultivating links to the outside world.

## Choosing Canadian Priorities

At the same time, we must accept that we cannot do everything, that we have more than ever to choose where and how we make a difference in the world.

Both peacebuilding and international communications, the issues you have been discussing, stand out as diplomatic niches that Canada is well placed to occupy. We have extensive expertise in both areas. We are in the forefront of international work on new responses to conflict, including the rapid-reaction study we tabled at the United Nations. And, above all, we are well placed to wield the "soft power" needed to be effective in these new areas of diplomacy. By "soft power," I mean the international influence that knowledge, information and an attractive set of values confer. In a wired world, this influence is power - the power to get things done by building coalitions, like the multinational force for Zaire, rather than by coercion.

## With the Help of Canadians

The National Forum, and other conduits for consultation, have a double role: in maintaining Canadian support for our internationalist vocation and in setting priorities, that is, in examining which niches Canada can and should seek out. Our foreign policy must be rooted in public acceptance and support. It must take its direction