

new world elsewhere. That spirit also led the First Nations to pass on to those new settlers the essence of this generous land. And it encourages people from all over the world to share in our prospects or to take refuge here and make a fresh start, safe from tyranny and violence. It inspires our artists, our scientists, our peacekeepers and our institutions as they work to spread our know-how and our message of hope. Today, we are the sum of those adventures.

We are encouraged to believe that everything is possible in this country, and my own adventure represents, for me and for others, a spark of hope that I want kept alive for the greatest number.

I know that our planet is fragile, and that natural disasters, like the one that recently assailed our American neighbours, are a brutal reminder of that fragility. And we have seen so many lose their possessions. And as is universally the case in such circumstances, we have seen emerge entire segments of a population, among the most destitute, men and women who had nowhere to go. Dispossessed, with no points of reference, facing sheer devastation, even utter dismay. Such images we have seen before—from Darfur, from Haiti, from Niger. And this time they came from New Orleans, from the margins of an affluent society.

Other changes have come, changes that sometimes leave us perplexed. Redefining national boundaries and the violent upheavals that sometimes accompany it, the opening of markets, the speed and convergence of our systems of communication, mean that the map of the world is changing day by day, before our eyes, and that some countries may be wondering about where they



Madame Jean and U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice meet at Rideau Hall on October 25, 2005.

fit in. The stakes are high: they include taking part in increasing globalization while at the same time protecting features that enrich humanity with our own perceptions of the world.

As a journalist, the profession I practised with passion and resolve, I have been a privileged witness both of a good many upheavals and of an unprecedented opening onto the world. I pledge that I will go on listening and that my curiosity will remain keen. We are at a turning point in the history of civilization and more than ever before, our future rests on those who are forcing us to imagine the world of tomorrow. Those women and men are today showing us the vast range of what is possible for us. They are etching upon our memories the breadth of our aspirations. They are holding out a mirror that reveals the gap between what we are and what we aspire to be.

There is an observation by Montesquieu, a philosopher of the Enlightenment, that has a particular resonance for me. It states: “The duty of the citizen becomes a crime if it makes him forget the duty of the man.” To this, I would of course add “the duty of the woman,” because we want recognition as full-fledged citizens in our own right. That statement inspires me and comforts me; for me it is a rampart against the barbarism that afflicts so many in this world. And it reminds me how fortunate we are to be citizens of a country that’s not afraid to tear down walls of prejudice, one whose generosity is its finest attribute in the concert of nations.

I hope with all my heart that, together, we can call upon the vigour of our shared history to realize our dearest and most ambitious wish: to make a better world. 🍁

**Read the full text of Governor General Michaëlle Jean’s installation speech at [www.gg.ca](http://www.gg.ca).**



New adventure: Madame Jean and Jean-Daniel Lafond leave Parliament Hill by landau.