

THE CANADA - NORWAY PARTNERSHIP

In May 1998, Canada and Norway signed a formal agreement aimed at working together for the promotion of peacebuilding in the world. Known as the Lysœn Declaration, the agreement brought immediate results on two key issues: landmines and the International Criminal Court. As part of the agreement to promote human security, our two countries continue to work closely on human rights, international humanitarian law, gender dimensions in peacebuilding, small arms proliferation, children in armed conflict, child labour, and Arctic and northern co-operation.

On September 16, 1998, Minister Axworthy met with Norwegian Foreign Minister Knut Vollebæk in Ottawa to review what has been a successful first stage in the partnership. Given the success of the initiative, they agreed to involve other like-minded countries. On September 25, they co-hosted a meeting to outline some of the measures they are taking and to exhort others to join their efforts. Over 90 countries participated in the meeting — reflecting the world-wide need for greater security, concrete action and a new approach to human security.

The meeting was also evidence that Canada and Norway's soft power approach, which is based on negotiation rather than coercion, powerful ideas rather than powerful weapons, and public diplomacy rather than backroom bargaining as an effective means to pursue a human security

agenda, had struck a powerful chord in the international community. A concrete example of the Canada-Norway partnership is currently under way in Algeria. Canadian child mental health professionals in collaboration with Norwegian partners are working with Algerian psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers and educators to provide appropriate counselling and support to Algerian children and their caregivers traumatized by exposure to extreme violence. The Montréal-based Centre canadien d'étude et de coopération internationale manages the project, with the Montreal Children's Hospital and the McGill University Faculty of Medicine providing technical support.

Since the violence started in Algeria in 1993, the incidence of juvenile diabetes, stuttering, and epilepsy has increased dramatically. Nightmares are common to all children, as is the fear that a bomb may go off anywhere, anytime, including at school. Severe depression, anxiety, hostility and lack of trust are other symptoms of psychological pain that need to be addressed.

The project is also aimed at promoting the concept of children as a "zone of peace" in the midst of civil violence, and it seeks a common commitment by all parties to the protection and well-being of all Algerian children. It is hoped that with its origins based on quiet diplomacy, the project will have wider benefits for peacebuilding and dialogue in the Algerian society. ●—

"Our goal is to work with other like-minded countries and partners from civil society to promote respect for human rights and humanitarian law. This is the new diplomacy that we want to put to work. A humane world is a safe world."

Lloyd Axworthy and Knut Vollebæk, *International Herald Tribune*, October 21, 1998.

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