

area is home to a number of small, but tightly knit communities. The cool temperatures of the Arctic circle cannot dampen the warmth of its inhabitants! Yet the harsh and rugged northern landscape masks a fragile ecosystem. I think every one of us here remembers all too well the severe damage that occurred when the Exxon Valdez ran aground off the coast of Alaska. Yes, the North must be an integral part of our foreign policy. Air pollution knows no boundaries, and, though we would like to think otherwise, PCBs, radioactive substances and even insecticides have all found their way into the ice and snows of this once pristine environment.

Canada's Arctic foreign policy must be premised not only on protecting the fragile environment, but also on preserving the traditional way of life of Aboriginal peoples. To do this, we must ensure that Aboriginal peoples have a direct role in decision making on the full range of Arctic issues.

As you are well aware, the Government is building a new partnership with Aboriginal peoples based on trust, mutual respect and full participation in the decision-making process. A more comprehensive process for consultation between government and Aboriginal representatives must be developed. I want to assure you today that in matters of foreign policy that have an impact on the circumpolar Arctic, I will be insisting upon full and ongoing consultations with Canada's Arctic peoples, and in particular, Aboriginal peoples.

The interest we have in the circumpolar Arctic is to ensure that policy making is as coherent and integrated as possible. It is essential that we give ourselves the necessary means to address environmental concerns in the Arctic region, to conduct proper scientific research, to develop transportation networks and to ensure sustainable economic development that is attuned to the Arctic's unique character. A framework must be established to guarantee the full participation of our Arctic Aboriginal peoples in this process.

Coherence and integration also require close attention to developing co-operative relations among all our circumpolar Arctic neighbours. Canada is one of eight states bordering on the Arctic circle, the others being Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, the United States, and Denmark, which has responsibility for the self-governing territory of Greenland. We must count on our very good bilateral relations with all of these countries, and on a shared commitment to multilateralism, to move ahead on such issues as pollution prevention, sustainable economic development, policy co-ordination and a full role for Arctic Aboriginal peoples.

It goes without saying that in this collaborative effort, each state must maintain respect for the sovereignty of others. The