



Department of Foreign Affairs
and International Trade



CANADA

Ministère des Affaires étrangères
et du Commerce international

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I would like to congratulate the Université du Québec à Montréal and the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development for organizing this important event.

I welcome the opportunity to have your views, and recognize the commitment and dedication you bring to African affairs.

Your participation is a reaffirmation that what goes on outside Canada's borders is important to Canadians. Africa's situation is unique, as it is the most impoverished region in the world and wracked by long-standing, ingrained crises.

This month, Prime Minister Chrétien addressed world leaders and business people gathered in New York at the World Economic Forum. In a world turned upside down since the tragic events of September 11, the Prime Minister's speech focussed on one theme: Africa.

The Prime Minister's message was one of both alarm and hope. Alarm because by every index or measure, and in spite of decades of development aid, Africa lives on the fringes of our globalized world. And it is at risk of falling so far behind that it may never catch up. Africa is the only continent where poverty is on the rise; where life expectancy is 47 years, *and declining* largely from HIV/AIDS; where more than 140 million youths are illiterate; where one in five persons is caught up in armed conflict. Hope, because progressive African leaders have embraced a new vision, embodied in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). It is a vision founded on freedom and democracy. And the principle that the key to progress in Africa lies, first and foremost, with Africans.

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