

On behalf of the Government of Canada, I wish to welcome you to Ottawa on this occasion, and to wish you well in your deliberations. Organizations such as yours play an invaluable role in reinforcing public understanding of the United Nations and public commitment to its goals. That commitment in turn reinforces the political will of governments to participate constructively as members of the United Nations. I hope your meeting here in Ottawa will be a successful one, and also an enjoyable one for each of you personally.

We are proud that the United Nations Association in Canada was a founding member of the World Federation and that it has the honour this year of hosting the Plenary Assembly. Its promotional activities vis-à-vis the Canadian public and its quiet but persistent support of United Nations objectives vis-à-vis the Canadian Government have made it a most effective interlocuteur in many fields of multilateral policy-making. We congratulate the UN Association in Canada on achieving this degree of success.

You have chosen to focus on three subjects at this Assembly: peace, development and human rights. Each of them is a complex subject based on simple principles of humanity and justice to which Canada is unquestionably committed. The three subjects are united under the theme: "the U.N. system at work". Let me refer very briefly to each of them, before returning to the umbrella theme.

The first subject is peace. Participants at this Assembly will be aware of Canada's commitment to international peace and security. In 1956, Canada's Foreign Minister (and later Prime Minister) Lester Pearson, was the key figure in the creation of the first U.N. peacekeeping force to separate the belligerents at the end of the Suez war. We have participated in most peacekeeping operations since, and are currently active in four such operations in the Middle East and Cyprus. Canada is also energetically pursuing arms control measures in the various international forums in which we have a seat. We have also demonstrated a keen interest in those negotiations at which we are not directly represented. We believe that arms control proposals must be practical and responsive to the security concerns of both sides if they are to be useful. We have concentrated in particular on advancing the techniques of verification as an essential confidence building measure.

The United Nations is occasionally criticized for its inability to bring about disarmament or to end particular regional conflicts. But these expectations are unreasonably high. The achievement of peace and the international rule of