

Keynote Speech

“Social Policy in a Globalizing Era”

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Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific)

INTRODUCTION

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen. I would like to begin by thanking Kwansai Gakuin University, the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research and the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada for the opportunity to speak to you today.

I am very pleased, as well, to have the honour to speak at Kwansai Gakuin University which has a close partnership with a number of Canadian universities, and whose 4th Chancellor, a Canadian missionary, Dr. Bates, established the university's motto, “Mastery for Service,” encouraging students to not only master academic knowledge, but also to serve others. This is a very appropriate motto to guide us in this social policy symposium.

Canada places great importance on the very positive and multi-faceted relationship we enjoy with Japan. In recognition of the special importance of the Canada-Japan relationship, the Canadian Government launched in March of this year the *Think Canada* festival. *Think Canada* is the largest ever Canadian festival to be held in Japan. It will continue until July with some 200 events throughout Japan highlighting Canadian Arts and Culture, Business, Science & Technology, Politics and Society, Education and Lifestyles.

This Social Policy Symposium is an important element of the Think Canada Festival. Canada-Japan cooperation in social policy is an innovative new aspect of our relationship from which we can realize mutual benefits.

Most countries around the world are grappling with how best, in the 21st century to secure economic prosperity in an increasingly globalized society while at the same time ensuring that no member of society is left behind. Increasing our knowledge base regarding social policy is an important part of ensuring this goal; and this conference is an excellent mechanism to share ideas, knowledge and experience on these issues.

Today we will have the opportunity to learn about and discuss three social policy issues that are of great concern in both of our countries. I am pleased to see that you have focused on the three issues of Health, Ageing, and Work and Family. I believe that bilateral cooperation on social policy will enable Japan and Canada to acquire a better mutual understanding of social policy concerns and will allow us to learn and benefit from each other through a sharing of knowledge, ideas and experience.

Developing partnerships in the policy research community, as we see here today, is critical to our understanding and knowledge development of social policy. With proper knowledge, we will be better prepared to face the many challenges that both Japan and Canada face in this era of globalization.

As you are all well aware, social policy cannot be discussed in the abstract, nor can it be divorced from the issue of ethics and values.