

Mr. President, esteemed colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, it is an honour for me to address this illustrious assembly.

The UN is the very manifestation of the commitment we have all made to contribute to peace and security and to create better living conditions in a climate of greater freedom.

For its part, the government I represent is always striving to make a stronger contribution on the international scene.

The Canadian government is a responsible interlocutor, and we do not take our commitment lightly. We are guided by unshakable principles.

Canada's commitment is not solely a function of our interests, but also, and above all, of the values Canadians hold dear—values such as freedom, human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

These are the values underlying our presence in Afghanistan, Haiti, Sudan and elsewhere.

And these are the same values and aspirations that are embodied in the Preamble to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights: "the inherent dignity and the rights of all members of the human family are the foundation of freedom, justice and peace."

Article 1 of the Declaration says further, "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."

These are not abstract concepts. They are concrete, with effects both immediate and profound.

Promoting them is not enough. They must be protected and defended, particularly when they are under assault—in Afghanistan, in Burma, in Sudan, in Iran and elsewhere.

Mr. President, in Kabul, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has confirmed the UN's desire to stabilize Afghanistan.

Canada has engaged its political commitment and practical capabilities to rebuild security, democracy, human rights and prosperity in that country.

Canada believes a united international community must support efforts to rebuild Afghanistan. International organizations, including the UN, NATO and the World Bank, must work toward this common goal.

No one country can do this alone. To fully implement Security Council decisions, we must work in close partnership, both with the Government of Afghanistan and with our friends and allies.