

Message from the Prime Minister



For over 50 years, the United Nations has embodied Canada's highest hopes for a world at peace. There are simple reasons for our commitment to the UN: it stands for the rule of law, social and political justice, international co-operation and the setting of universal standards, as well as the peaceful resolution of disputes.

These are important principles for Canadians because they closely relate to how we understand ourselves as a country. Although it is sometimes forgotten, the greatest hope of the global community is to achieve what we in Canada have achieved for ourselves: a means of living together in peace and understanding.

The United Nations has struggled against racism and colonialism, against disease and illiteracy. It has stood up for those who have no voice—the oppressed, including millions of women and children around the world.

The UN has contained many conflicts and brought relief to their victims. But the work is far from finished: peace remains elusive for millions around the world, the gap between rich and poor countries is far too wide, and the rights of nations and of individuals under international law must still be defended.

The United Nations and its family of specialized agencies have established a framework for multilateral relationships among states—for disparate activities ranging from co-ordinating the distribution of mail and the registration of patents, to co-operation in the management of the world's oceans and outer space. They have also set and defended universal norms and values, co-ordinated research and technology transfers, and promoted sustainable development in many fields.

While there may not be an immediate solution to every problem, we value the means by which we can pursue potential answers together with mutual respect, tolerance, accommodation and compromise.

Today as much as ever, we need the United Nations to maintain international stability and order, and to tackle issues that know no borders.

Canada's strong commitment to the UN and its humanitarian principles is a reflection of our deep, unyielding belief in the future—a belief helping us build a country that the United Nations has named the best country in the world in which to live.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jean Chrétien". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jean Chrétien