

By 2006, one Canadian in six will belong to a visible minority. Already, according to the UN's official statistics, Toronto is the most multicultural city in the world.

Business recognizes that Canada's diversity is an asset in the domestic and international market. The Conference Board of Canada works with business, industry and trade associations to find new ways for Canadian companies to get the best return from Canada's linguistic and cultural diversity. Other institutions work within the framework of the Canadian Ethnocultural Council to ensure the preservation, enhancement and sharing of the cultural heritage of Canadians.

We are a society committed to offering equal opportunities to each person, including women, young people, residents of remote areas, persons with disabilities and ethnic minorities. Canada has many specialized services that equally support the needs and interests of all our citizens, despite regional, linguistic or ethnic differences. The Millennium Scholarship Fund helps make higher education available to all Canadian students. The Canadian Bureau for International Education runs an international student reception service at key international airports.

A warm welcome is also given through the Host Program, a volunteer initiative that helps newcomers with language barriers, lends support and provides an introduction to Canadian life.

By the end of 2001, the Connecting Canadians program will have established public Internet sites in 10 000 rural, remote and urban areas across Canada. Providing on-line services is one key way of enhancing the ability of all Canadians to get information.

Canada's Broadcasting Act recognizes the need to reflect our diversity through programming.

For example, nine radio stations in five cities devote all their airtime to individual ethnic groups, and more than 60 radio stations include ethnic broadcasting in their schedules. Cable companies have programming in a variety of languages, and several television stations serve targeted ethnic communities. More than 40 cultures are represented in Canada's ethnic press, which consists of over 100 daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly ethnic-language publications.

A tolerant society, with values and progressive policies are key characteristics of a caring Canada. Our country speaks out internationally in a clear voice on human rights, often commenting on the situation in various countries around the world. We do so as part of our commitment to the universality of human rights. We make every effort to face the ongoing challenge of preserving the human rights of all our own citizens.