

Mr. President of the General Conference,  
Mr. President of the Executive Board,  
Mr. Director General,  
Distinguished Delegates,

In the name of my delegation, I wish to add my voice to that of the distinguished speakers who have preceded me, to congratulate the President of the General Conference on his election. I would also like to congratulate the Director General, Mr. M'Bow, for the excellent organization of this conference and for the improvement in the quality of the documents on which our discussions will be based. May I note too the cooperation and hard work of the Bulgarian Government which has contributed to the convivial atmosphere that surrounds these proceedings. The excellence of your hospitality in Sofia, I venture to hope, will be matched by the results of this Conference.

Canada's expectations with respect to those results are, we believe, set at a realistic and pragmatic level. But they are high nonetheless, based on the considerable progress in the direction of reform that we have achieved in UNESCO over the last two years.

Our expectations have to be high -- because the stability of the entire UN family in large measure will be affected by the success of UNESCO's efforts to revitalize its operations and improve its programmes. The UN turns 40 in just a few days. 40 is a turning point for most people, signalling the onset of middle age. And the UN system suffers from many of the maladies associated with reaching 40 -- more pronounced inertia; a thickening around the budgetary middle; greater resistance to tackling new and troublesome issues; anxiety about what the future holds. But I don't want to overstate the downside of turning 40. It can also be a time of lookin' great and feelin' good.

The multilateral system has an essential, indeed a critical, place in Canada's foreign policy. It complements our bilateral relations and gives a middle power like Canada the opportunity to enlarge its scope and influence. We support multilateralism strongly. We have an interest in its efficiency and its effectiveness. We are constantly seeking ways to help renew it and ensure that progress in the UN reflects the changing demands of its members.

Mr. President, Canada's commitment to the ideals and the mandate of UNESCO is unaltered. We need a UNESCO. The world needs a UNESCO. It represents a key element in the UN system. Today though, UNESCO is somewhat representative of the general state of affairs in the UN. It has been called a "test case" for