

region, creating a need for a commonly agreed policy framework within which to work. Externally, the establishment of the Arctic Council provides a new opportunity to focus and clarify Canada's interests and priorities for circumpolar co-operation. As Canada completes its term as first Chair of the Council, it has an interest in making sure that the Council's positive beginnings are consolidated and built upon over the years to come. This demands that we be very clear about our own national interests and priorities in the Arctic region. Further, by articulating well-defined national interests in a northern foreign policy, Canada will be in a stronger position in working with its Arctic neighbours. Canada's new northern foreign policy will be recognized as emanating from an agreed set of national objectives that are there for all to see.

In 1996 I stated, *"Our foreign policy must be rooted in public acceptance and support. It must take its direction from what Canadians think is possible and desirable."* This applies very much to the north. In the past, Canada's northern foreign policy was derived from values and perspectives originating in the south and reflecting little awareness of, or concern for, northern interests. In contrast, more than ever before then northern foreign policy framework presented in this document has been influenced very substantially by input from the north. It reflects the significant body of contributions from northern Canadians over the past few years, as well as that provided by southern policy analysts. To a considerable extent, therefore, it advances a policy framework that has emerged from Canada's north and reflects the values, perspectives and aspirations of its peoples.

This input has been received from a wide range of sources, including the hundreds of witnesses who have testified before Parliamentary committees (notably the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade's 1997 review of Canada's Arctic relations), and those governmental and non-governmental representatives who have participated in conferences concerned with Canada's northern foreign policy. Prominent among the public consultations contributing to this policy was the National Forum on Canada's Circumpolar Relations, which was held in early 1998 in three northern and two southern centres. The consultations and conferences that have contributed to this new northern foreign policy framework are listed in an appendix to this document.

The new northern foreign policy framework presented here is a work in progress. Many Canadians, especially northerners, will see their ideas reflected in it, and hopefully will recognize in it the Government's commitment to working in partnership with them to advance the national objectives set out here. This paper is intended to constitute a basis for further consultation that will be undertaken in a spirit of partnership with the full range of stakeholders, including northern Aboriginal organizations, the territorial governments, federal departments and agencies, and other concerned Canadians. The result will be a new northern foreign policy for Canada that truly reflects our country's growing interests in this important region.

Lloyd Axworthy
Minister of Foreign Affairs

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