

It is a great honour for me to welcome you to the launch of the Canadian initiative to mark the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. This anniversary should be the occasion for the world community to embark upon a worldwide dialogue on how the UN can fulfil the promises of the Charter in the 21st Century.

We welcome today Ambassador Richard Butler, Australia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations and Chairman of the UN Preparatory Committee for the 50th anniversary. Ambassador Butler's knowledge of, and commitment to, the UN made him an obvious choice for the task.

I would also like to welcome the members of the Canadian National Committee for the UN's 50th anniversary. It's a true measure of the importance that we in Canada attach to this organization that such a distinguished group of Canadians, chaired by Douglas Roche, has agreed to serve on the Committee.

This Committee has been created in response to a call from United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In launching the committee today, we are setting in motion the process leading to October 24, 1995 -- the anniversary of the day the Charter was ratified 50 years before.

As Prime Minister Mulroney has noted, Canada's commitment to the principles of the Charter and to international co-operation is no fashionable pose. Since 1945, it has been a motivating force of our foreign policy. It is thus with great enthusiasm that Canadians look forward to this anniversary.

Among the celebrations that are envisaged is an international symposium, which will be held in Quebec City in October 1995, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

In Montreal, a special committee has been established to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the International Civil Aviation Authority (ICAO). December 7, 1994 has been designated International Civil Aviation Day, and Canada Post will create a special stamp for the occasion.

These are only a beginning, and we expect that Canadians will be celebrating the 1995 anniversary in many different ways. Canada has much to celebrate as a member of the United Nations. Since 1945, we have woven many threads into the UN tapestry. Canada was instrumental in the drafting of both the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We have served many very productive terms on the Security Council, and many thousands of Canadians have been or are employed in the UN and its specialized agencies.

One of Canada's most challenging and visible UN roles is that of international peacekeeper. We have been actively involved in almost every peacekeeping operation since Canadian Nobel Laureate