

FOREWORD FROM THE PRIME MINISTER

The Statement sets out how these responsibilities are shaping our diplomacy and how they must reshape multilateralism. Our multilateral institutions must be up to the task. We must reform for the future the international systems that have served us well. That means tackling the widening divide between rich and poor nations, and accommodating new centres of power. A recent UN report recommended a number of changes proposed by Canada, including the enshrining of the Responsibility to Protect.

This is a defining period for the United Nations, the best opportunity in memory to significantly improve an institution that is essential to our collective security and prosperity. We will work with like-minded countries in support of recommendations for a new Peacebuilding Commission, a Human Rights Council, and an internationally agreed definition of terrorism. We will support reform of the Security Council to make it more effective and more representative—and to ensure that progressive countries like Canada are able to participate more frequently.

We will also continue to press for a new forum that would bring together the leaders of 20 or so leading countries from the developed and developing world to hold talks on how to deal with some of the world's most pressing problems, including reforms to our multilateral systems. The L20 may not come easily but it will be created because it makes sense. It is always difficult to get countries to accept changes in their political status, but it cannot be avoided. As has been noted before, it can take a great deal of effort to bring about the inevitable.

We seek nothing less than a new multilateralism, in which the real and pressing needs of people are addressed. Canada has always contributed to and benefited from multilateralism. We believe strongly in finding cooperative solutions. But we also recognize that we must be ready to change with the times and lead where we can, especially where multilateral institutions are acting too slowly or are not up to the task.

Making a Difference

In our current age, the changes to the world's economic, security and political landscapes are increasingly seismic, the global fault lines more unstable and numerous. We see it in the headlines of our day. We feel the anxiety of a world on edge.

That is why as Canadians we must be active beyond our borders to protect and promote our values and our interests—security in the face of terrorism and the increasing threat of nuclear proliferation, and our trading relationships with the United States, Mexico and throughout the world. We must advance the concerns of people who seek freedom, stability, democracy and above all, a better life. And while we value multilateralism and know the great good that international cooperation can achieve, we must ultimately be committed to playing a lead role in specific initiatives and, on occasion, to resolving to go it alone. We have the means to help, and so we will. We must.

Canadians want us to promote our international interests vigorously. Canadians know we have to make tough choices to safeguard our freedom and security, our prosperity and quality of life. Canada can make a difference through its foreign policy, through its relationships across the globe. Building on our strengths, adapting to a changing world, we will make a difference.



The Right Honourable Paul Martin
Prime Minister of Canada