

FIRST OF ALL, MR. CHAIRMAN, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK HIS EXCELLENCY, FEDERAL COUNSELLOR AUBERT, FOR HIS WORDS OF WELCOME, AS WELL AS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, THE CANTON OF BERNE AND THE PEOPLE OF SWITZERLAND, WHO HAVE ALREADY DISPLAYED SUCH WARM AND FRIENDLY HOSPITALITY TO US ALL IN THEIR BEAUTIFUL AND HISTORIC CAPITAL. THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, MR. FETSCHERIN, AND HIS EFFICIENT STAFF, HAVE PROVIDED US WITH IMPECCABLE ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT, WHICH WILL ENABLE THE CONFERENCE MECHANISM TO RUN -- IF I MAY SAY SO -- AS SMOOTHLY AS A FINE SWISS WATCH, AND THUS ENABLE US TO DEVOTE TO OUR IMPORTANT DELIBERATIONS THE ATTENTION THEY DESERVE.

CANADA BELIEVES, MR. CHAIRMAN, NOT ONLY THAT OUR DELIBERATIONS ARE VERY IMPORTANT, BUT THAT THIS EXPERTS MEETING ON HUMAN CONTACTS IS ONE OF THE MORE SIGNIFICANT GATHERINGS IN THE TEN-YEAR HISTORY OF THE CSCE. THIS IS NOT JUST BECAUSE THE SUBJECT MATTER TOUCHES ON THE MOST SENSITIVE AND EMOTIONAL HUMAN CONCERNS, BUT ALSO BECAUSE IT REFLECTS THE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES CONFRONTING US IN OUR ATTEMPTS TO CREATE A MORE SECURE AND CONFIDENT ENVIRONMENT WITHIN THE CSCE REGION.

CANADA HAS A SPECIAL INTEREST IN THIS MEETING BECAUSE THE VAST MAJORITY OF ITS CITIZENS HAVE THEIR FAMILY ORIGINS IN EUROPE, AND BECAUSE THE PROBLEMS THE CSCE WAS CREATED TO RESOLVE -- PROBLEMS ARISING FROM THE GULF BETWEEN TWO PARTS OF EUROPE AND TWO SYSTEMS -- CONTINUE TO AFFECT IN A PROFOUND PERSONAL WAY A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF OUR CITIZENS, AND PARTICULARLY THOSE WHOSE ROOTS ARE IN EASTERN EUROPE AND THE SOVIET UNION.