

Respect for ethnic and other minorities is crucial to the achievement of peace and stability in this world of ours. It is based upon the realistic acceptance that change cannot be initiated by force. Rather conditions must be created for peaceful change. Only by allowing minorities to nurture and promote their distinctiveness can nations hope to reduce tensions within and between their borders.

Our objective, which has been enunciated most forcefully through proposals at the Third Follow-Up Meeting in Vienna of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, is to ensure that citizens who are members of national minorities or regional cultures enjoy a status equal to that of any other citizen. Furthermore, they must be able to establish and maintain unimpeded contacts by foreign travel or other means of communication with those sharing a common heritage.

The twentieth century has been marred by too many wars, too much destruction inflicted on innocent victims. It is the duty, of every Canadian, whatever our background, to remember, and to remind our children, of the atrocities of the past and to ensure that they do not occur again. As Canadians we look, with our children, towards shaping a better future, towards working together to build a better world -- a world where the rights of individuals are respected, where people are not deprived of their life or liberty because of their sex, their race or their religion -- a world more human and more civilized.

And I value, in particular, the contribution that your community has made to the building of our contemporary Canada. A Canada that is strong, self-confident and caring, a Canada that looks forward to the turn of the century, and an even brighter and more promising future for all of us who are bound to contribute to its unique and multicultural heritage.