

Canada is unique among nations in its multicultural heritage. This has enriched our culture, enhanced our prosperity and defined our democracy.

Europe is moving away from the constant threat of conflict between states. But in this process, old animosities - frozen and unaddressed - are re-emerging. The end of tension between states should not be purchased at the price of tension within states. Democracy and prosperity depend on external peace and internal peace. Protection and respect for the rights of minorities are essential to this peace.

During this Conference, Canada will propose that the concluding document contain the following:

- a firm commitment to the human rights of individuals belonging to minorities;
- commitments to promote tolerance and take firm action to suppress hate propaganda directed against minorities;
- mechanisms to deal with specific minority problems as they arise.

Canada will be making specific proposals in each of these areas. We will propose the addition of an extra step to the human dimension mechanism that would serve to diffuse conflict and promote dialogue by providing for the appointment of rapporteurs to investigate specific situations and report to the governments concerned and to the CSCE.

In proposing these provisions, we recognize that it is not laws or constitutions that will protect minority rights and prevent tension and prejudice. It is the existence of societies infused with tolerance and respect that is the only guarantee. But the CSCE, in promoting democracy, the freer movement of people, information and ideas and in increasing human contacts is playing - and can play - a vital role in the evolution of all our societies.

There are many other elements essential to the development of democracy, and all will find strong Canadian support. They include: freedom of speech and of association; free trade unions, the role of non-governmental organizations in promoting human rights; religious freedoms; and the right to leave and return to one's country without fear for oneself or one's family. Canada believes that a comprehensive statement of the ideals and elements essential to the development of democracy should, at a minimum, include these items.

No one has a blueprint for democracy. Democracies must be home-grown. But we can all learn from each other. As we all evolve and as democracy develops, we will be involved in a dynamic dialogue, sharing advice and experiences. All democracies sometimes fall short of their ideals. But the particular strength of democracies is our openness, our capacity to accept criticism, our willingness to set and meet always higher standards for ourselves - and to be candid to each other.