

Both the Joint Committee and the Government recognize that changes on the international scene will speed up rather than slow down. Unfortunately, the financial constraints that we face are not likely to go away in a hurry. Mr. Speaker, a responsible government must thus constantly re-evaluate its strategies openly and clearly, to reflect the interests and concerns of Canadian men and women more effectively. Canadians are increasingly aware that their actions, both individual and collective, have international consequences. The once-clear distinction between national and international affairs is quickly becoming blurred, forcing us to take a broader view of things. The number of stakeholders in foreign policy continues to grow. In short, international relations are no longer the concern of governments alone, but of all Canadian men and women. The Government is thus committed to continuing consultation and to giving members of Parliament a vital role in developing our foreign policy.

Thus, in March 1994, the Government invited Canadians from various walks of life to take part in the first National Forum on Canada's International Relations. I wish to confirm today that we intend to make this forum an annual event. Since our term of office began, we have held five parliamentary debates on key foreign-policy issues. Canadian foreign policy will no longer be developed behind closed doors; all Canadians and their members of Parliament will be involved.

With my colleagues, the two Secretaries of State, and the Minister for International Trade, I held a series of consultations and round tables across Canada. I can tell you that we will continue these consultations throughout our term of office.

Based on numerous consultations with Canadians and the report of the Joint Committee, and recognizing the need for a flexible and effective foreign policy, the Government has identified three key objectives that will guide its activities on the international scene in the years to come. These objectives are:

- to promote jobs and prosperity;
- to promote our security in a stable international framework;
- to share our values and our culture.

These objectives complement one another, Mr. Speaker, and reflect the Government's national priorities.

With regard to our first objective, I would like to begin by saying that the Government is committed to implementing a foreign policy that promotes access of Canadian goods and services to foreign markets. The objective is clear: to defend and increase Canada's prosperity, and to promote jobs and growth by diversifying our economic and trade relations.