



Ottawa, Canada K1A 0G2

April 1997

Dear Fellow Citizens,

Starting in 1994 the Federal government has sponsored an annual discussion with Canadians called the National Forum on Canada's International Relations. This discussion is meant to encourage public views and contributions to foreign policy issues. In 1996 I asked the newly established Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development to help engage Canadians in a discussion of two key international questions for Canada: the future of peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and the creation of an international strategy for communicating Canada's messages abroad.

As in previous years, my colleague the Minister responsible for CIDA (Pierre Pettigrew and then Don Boudria) co-sponsored these discussions. The Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development designed a successful new model for the National Forum, six meetings across the country to enable broader participation. The reports from those six meetings constitute this, the 1996 National Forum Report.

The National Forum discussions generated very useful views and ideas. As you will read in this Report, participants have a strong desire to base both Canada's messages abroad and Canada's peacebuilding efforts on core Canadian values (democracy, human rights, respect for different cultures). The National Forum signalled interest in and concern about military - civilian cooperation in peacebuilding activities, identified Canadian resource assessment needs and generated useful ideas about peacebuilding training and preparation. Those discussing communications identified important issues, proposed specific actions (like saving radio Canada International) and contributed to the continuing evolution of Canada's International Communications Strategy. These views will continue to be of value to me and other policy makers.

The National Forum is to be a permanent discussion with Canadians on key international issues. It should be seen as a complement to the work of Parliament and its Committees, to the policy work of government departments and to the on-going consultations and dialogue between government and citizens on foreign policy and overseas development issues.

I would like to thank all the participants in the six meetings of the 1996 National Forum, with a special thanks to the six volunteer organizing groups.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lloyd Axworthy".

Lloyd Axworthy