

The Canadian government, for its part, has reiterated publicly on a number of occasions its ongoing commitment to the United Nations system. We recognize there are problems in it but we are committed to improving it from within. We believe the UN represents an important means to extend economic development, reduce global tensions and improve respect for human rights.

I have in the past referred to the "common ground" approach to international relations. We live in a highly interdependent world where political decisions and economic policies pursued in one country can have a profound impact on citizens living in another country thousands of miles away. While we live in a world made up of many nation states -- with different socio-economic systems, languages and cultures -- we are becoming more and more dependent on each other for the prosperity, indeed the survival, of all.

It is my view that human contacts and dialogue can make an important contribution to the building of a better world. Increasing knowledge and understanding about the rest of the world ought to develop an awareness of other peoples and, hopefully, a sense of shared interests. This process may lead to a greater awareness that we all share the "common ground" on the planet together. It should also help to develop a sense of global consciousness and responsibility so that individuals begin to see themselves as part of the global community rather than simply part of a nation state.