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**WORKING**  
**FOR PEACE,**  
**DEMOCRACY**  
**AND PROGRESS**

**Canada's Foreign**  
**Policy Priorities**  
**in the 1990s**

External Affairs and  
International Trade Canada

Canada

# ***Lasting Values in a Changing World***

***The very existence of Canada — its languages, its cultures, its values, its tolerant spirit, its standard of behaviour — has represented an independent voice and has constituted something different, something special, for the larger world. By freely forging a united nation based on respect for diversity, Canadians bring a special sensitivity to other problems in the world.***

***The Honourable  
Barbara McDougall,  
December 10, 1991***

Since December 11, 1931, when the Statute of Westminster formally recognized Canada's independence in international relations, Canada has sought to protect and enhance its security and prosperity through social and economic justice and the rule of law in an atmosphere of moderation and tolerance. Over the past 60 years, our active commitment to peacemaking and peacekeeping, to Third-World assistance and development and to freedom and human rights has earned Canada respect throughout the world.

These values have helped Canada contribute substantively — make a real difference — to international peace and progress. We have done this through the world's leading multilateral organizations: the United Nations, the Commonwealth, La Francophonie, the Organization of American States, the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation forum, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the Group of Seven industrialized countries.

Canada is the only country to be a member of all these organizations. Our membership has given us the opportunity not only to pursue our own interests in the world, but also to influence the course of world events. We will continue to pursue our security and prosperity by focusing on these organizations, as well as on key relationships with the United States, the European Community and Japan, as well as other important emerging players on the world stage.

## ***A World in Transition***

***We must turn our minds instead to the future, to find the right mix of policies to ensure stability and prosperity at home and, over time, to help create a more predictable, safer world.***

***The Honourable  
Barbara McDougall,  
December 10, 1991***

The world as we knew it for over 40 years no longer exists. The walls between East and West are crumbling under the pressure of profound political and economic change in Central and Eastern Europe, and particularly in the U.S.S.R. New economic superpowers, such as Germany and Japan, have emerged. Communications and transportation technologies are transforming the world's financial, trade and investment communities into a worldwide market place, making borders increasingly porous and individual countries more dependent on each other than ever before.

What is emerging is a new world, which holds the promise of peace and progress through international co-operation. At the same time, it is a world where old hatreds and ethnic hostility are on the rise, where there are new threats to security (drug trafficking, terrorism and uncontrolled mass movements of people), and where disease, illiteracy, poverty and environmental problems are still to be solved.

All the communities of the world, including Canada, are experiencing the immense pressures of rapid and often unpredictable change. Managing Canada's interests effectively in such circumstances requires vision, adaptability and leadership. Above all, it requires a definition of priorities and reliance on strong national values to guide the decisions we make and the actions we take.

## ***Priorities for Peace and Progress***

***Canada and Canadian foreign policy will become more focused and capable of acting more quickly in the Canadian national interest when unpredictable events occur.***

***The Honourable  
Barbara McDougall,  
December 10, 1991***

Canada will continue to act as an agent for international peace and progress. The following priorities will guide our foreign policy through the turbulent waters of the 1990s: strengthening co-operative security, sustaining a high standard

of living, and securing democracy and human values.

## **Strengthening Co-operative Security**

The Gulf War, the conflict in Yugoslavia and recent developments in the U.S.S.R. show how fragile international peace and stability are and how suddenly they can give way to instability and confrontation. Security remains a vital priority for Canadian foreign policy, particularly the establishment of a more co-operative world order based on the rule of law. Specifically, Canada's foreign policy will seek to:

- ▶ improve controls on the spread of instruments of war and weapons of mass destruction;
- ▶ expand national and multinational capabilities to deal with non-military threats to security including environmental degradation, drug trafficking, terrorism and irregular migration;
- ▶ improve the United Nations' ability to maintain peace and security, and expand peacekeeping operations to include functions such as electoral supervision, democratic development and refugee protection; and
- ▶ offer official development assistance to reduce poverty, enhance human rights and, in turn, build stable political entities.

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## **Sustaining a High Standard of Living**

Canada is a high-wage and high-cost country. We can sustain our high standard of living only if we continue to improve our productivity and the skills of our labour force, if we can offer an attractive environment for industries of the future, and if we secure access to major international markets for our

exporters. As a medium-sized country with limited fiscal resources, it is vital that we operate in a stable international economic system that is based on rules. Specifically, Canada's economic and trade policy will try to:

- ▶ advance our interests through multilateral, regional and bilateral trade negotiations and consultations;
- ▶ contribute to the development of more effective approaches to the international debt problem;
- ▶ encourage the integration of economies in transition (Central and Eastern Europe, including the U.S.S.R.) into the international trade and payments system, and the participation of newly industrialized economies in multilateral negotiations and organizations;
- ▶ vigorously promote trade and investment in knowledge-based and service industries; and
- ▶ maintain Canada's competitiveness in areas where we are already successful.

Our quality of life can be sustained only through effective national and international measures to protect the environment. Therefore, Canada will seek to:

- ▶ establish an effective legal foundation for international environmental standards, to which all countries are committed;
- ▶ integrate environmental considerations in decision-making by international financial and other institutions; and
- ▶ help developing countries to carry out their international environmental obligations.

## ***Securing Democracy and Human Values***

During the past few years there have been democratic revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe, as

well as solid democratic progress in Latin America and parts of Asia and Africa. The international movement toward democracy and greater respect for human values has never been greater. To help sustain that momentum, Canada's foreign policy will focus on securing democracy and human values through initiatives designed to:

- ▶ encourage respect for human rights, the rule of law and fundamental democratic principles;
- ▶ encourage good governance and sound economic policies;
- ▶ maintain a strong commitment to reducing poverty and providing humanitarian assistance;
- ▶ improve international co-ordination of humanitarian assistance; and
- ▶ develop bilateral and multilateral arrangements for regulating international migration.

**T**here is no map to the future, no instruction book to the new world order — we have only our values and the hard-earned lessons of the past to go on.

**Prime Minister Brian Mulroney,  
September 29, 1991**

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**December 1991**