



**5<sup>th</sup> Trudeau Conference on Public Policy  
Montreal, November 13-15, 2008**

***High Principles, Effective Proposals:  
Defining Canada's Global Agenda***

Canadians have a long tradition of responsible engagement in international affairs, which has become an important and integral part of our identity. Our understanding of the world has recently undergone a profound shift, however, thanks to experiences such as immigration, travel, and instant global communications. We suddenly seem more aware of situations that take place in distant locations, whether they relate to security, commerce, or culture. Our notions of risk, social obligation and engagement are evolving. There is no better time to re-examine our foreign commitments and reflect on opportunities and challenges. In fact, Canada's exceptional expertise should allow us to step forward as a world leader in several key areas, such as social and economic development, human rights, the building of a culturally diverse and open society, environmental protection, and cooperation between nations.

Daring to believe in Canada and Canada's role in the world means accepting the responsibility to define a global agenda for our country and ourselves. The challenge is complex and needs to take into account new power structures and new power centres, together with a wide range of unfamiliar issues.

First, participation in the international system is open to new types of actors, from global corporations to global activists – including extremist networks – and from cities to groups defined by ethnicity or religion. Charities and other foundations have more impact in some regions of the world than governments and international organizations. But at the same time, major world powers and emerging regional powers are still recruited among nation-states. While there is room for civil society to engage in international affairs, it may not yet be a substitute for foreign policy in the traditional sense of the word.

Second, we need to engage with a new generation of international organizations that correspond to this broader understanding of foreign or global policy. Granted, global institutions born out of the Second World War are well and alive, but an impressive array of regional and functional organizations has emerged in the last two decades, in all parts of the world and in all sectors of activity. Significantly, many of the more recent institutions work in domains for which Canada has a true passion, such as human rights, peacekeeping, climate change or development. In many cases, our contribution has yet to be determined, but as always, there is an opportunity for Canadians to take a constructive or leading role, as we have responsibly done in the past.

Finally, new international dynamics, rooted in strategic and economic realities, and also in culture and ideology, are imperative. Where demography meets the environment, there is increasing pressure on resources, and international migrations are becoming a constant concern, both in the developed and the developing world. The evolving situation of the Arctic shows not only how climate change hits home, but how it tests international power structures. Paradoxically, globalization has also reinforced the politics of identity. Instead of a global community bound together by trade ties and shared values, we may be entering a world of global division.

These three key elements – New Participants, New Institutions and New Dynamics – form the backbone of this fifth Annual Trudeau Conference. Three keynote speakers will address them in-depth after an opening lecture on "The Global Agenda for Canada." Participants will also be given a chance to explore the practical dimensions of each element in thematic dialogue sessions. In two panel discussions, experts and practitioners will examine Canada's role in a multilateral system and put in perspective the crucial issues we have to face in the future.