



GLOBAL
CENTRE FOR
PLURALISM CENTRE
MONDIAL DU
PLURALISME

FINAL AS DELIVERED

Honourable Mélanie Joly
Minister of Canadian Heritage
Speech for the Official Opening of the Global Centre for Pluralism
May 16, 2017

Your Excellency,
Your Highness, thank you for your great and touching words.
Special guests,
My Parliamentary Secretary Arif Virani,
All the Members of Parliament who are here as well,
Mesdames et Messieurs,

Bonjour, je suis ravie d'être avec vous aujourd'hui pour souligner cette occasion toute spéciale. Nous sommes ici sur le territoire traditionnel des Algonquins. Je tiens à les saluer.

Je tiens d'abord à souligner le travail de Son Altesse qui a permis de fonder, il y a plusieurs années, le Centre mondial du pluralisme en partenariat avec le gouvernement du Canada. Il est particulièrement remarquable d'avoir anticipé, il y a de cela au moins quinze ans, le besoin de promouvoir le respect de la diversité dans la société, lequel est, depuis, devenu un des grands enjeux planétaires.

The vision of the Global Centre for Pluralism is a world in which human differences are valued and diverse societies thrive.

Canada has the highest percentage of first generation immigrants in the OECD. 20% of all the population is a first generation immigrant. This is Canada's vision for a country and for our world. This is why our Government stands behind the Centre and its so many worthy initiatives.

And we appreciate His Highness's many other contributions to Canada, which include the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto, which I had the chance to visit some months ago. Not to mention the important international development cooperation with the Aga Khan Development Network to improve lives of disadvantaged communities in Asia and Africa.

Canada is recognized worldwide for its successful approach to diversity.

Our country is living proof that diversity and inclusion work together. That they alone will ensure peace and prosperity for all of us.

Canada's strength is found in many facets. In our respect for rights and freedoms; in our welcoming, open society; and in our diverse, multicultural character.

And there is no better time to reflect and build on these strengths than this year—the 150th anniversary of Confederation.

We are seizing this moment to focus on Canada's ethnic, linguistic, cultural and regional diversity and to find ways to deepen our relationships across the country and within our many communities.

I have said it many times, our social contract is rooted in three pillars: our two official languages, the importance of pluralism which includes multiculturalism and the protection of minority rights, and of course the important reconciliation with Indigenous peoples on this land.

As Minister responsible for Multiculturalism, I congratulate the Global Centre of Pluralism on the official opening of its new headquarters.

I am grateful for the wonderful work of renovation that was done to this historical building that is an integral part of the built heritage of the National Capital Region.

Revitalization of this historically significant waterfront area is a priority identified in the National Capital Commission's new 50 year plan for our region. Et donc, j'aimerais, Votre Altesse, au nom du Gouvernement du Canada, transmettre mes plus sincères remerciements à vous, bien entendu, qui a soutenu le projet, en collaborant avec la Commission de la capitale nationale.

Grâce au nouveau programme offert aux visiteurs et grâce aux activités spéciales qui seront présentées ici au cours de la prochaine année, le Centre sera mieux en mesure d'accomplir sa mission.

Le fait que le Centre soit installé ici consolide encore plus la position du Canada comme fervent défenseur des droits de la personne, de l'ouverture et de l'inclusion, et nous sommes fiers d'être un partenaire dans cette réussite.

Merci, Thank you.