

[Introduction]

Good afternoon.

Mr. President, fellow delegates, friends.

Before I begin, I would like to offer Canada's condolences, in the light of Tuesday's earthquake in Mexico, to all families and friends in mourning.

We wish a speedy recovery for all those who have been injured, and thank all first responders for their tireless efforts to help keep people safe.

Our thoughts are also with our friends in the Caribbean who continue to suffer from devastating hurricanes.

The generosity and resilience that millions have shown in the face of these natural disasters is an inspiration to the world, and Canada stands ready to lend a helping hand in whatever way it can.

It is an honour to be back here with you today, and to have an opportunity to speak to this year's theme: "Focusing on people: striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet."

Les gens. La paix. Une bonne qualité de vie et un environnement dont nous prenons soin.

L'équité pour tous, peu importe l'endroit.

C'est ce qui compte aux yeux des Canadiens.

Tout au long de notre histoire, nous avons travaillé d'arrache-pied pour réaliser nos ambitions.

Chez nous et ailleurs dans le monde.

Aujourd'hui, j'aimerais vous parler des leçons difficiles que le Canada a tirées en cours de route.

Le Canada n'est pas un pays des merveilles où les difficultés que vous connaissez n'existent pas.

On vit les mêmes défis que vous.

Le Canada est un projet en perpétuelle évolution.

Canada remains a work in progress.

So I want to tell you about the Canadian experience because for all the mistakes we've made, we remain hopeful.

Hopeful that we can do better, and be better, and treat each other with the dignity and the respect that is the birthright of every human being.

I want to tell you our story because I know that the challenges we have faced – and continue to face – are not unique in the world.

And neither are the solutions.

An approach that values human dignity – that emphasizes fairness and real opportunity for everyone – has a home in Canada and in every country.

It's an approach that doesn't just serve domestic needs, but that makes the world a better, more peaceful, more prosperous place for all.

[Progress for Indigenous Peoples in Canada]

This year, in 2017, Canada celebrated the 150th anniversary of Confederation. Our 150th birthday, if you will.

But Canada is much older than that.

It has been home to the descendants of settlers and immigrants for hundreds of years, and Indigenous Peoples for millennia.

We are a country is built on different cultures, different religions, different languages all coming together.

That diversity has become our great strength.

But that is not and has not always been true for everyone who shares our land.

Canada is built on the ancestral land of Indigenous Peoples – but regrettably, it's also a country that came into being without the meaningful participation of those who were there first.

And even where treaties had been formed to provide a foundation for proper relations, they have not been fully honoured or implemented.

For First Nations, Metis Nation and Inuit peoples in Canada, those early colonial relationships were not about strength through diversity, or a celebration of our differences.

For Indigenous Peoples in Canada, the experience was mostly one of humiliation, neglect, and abuse.

Ils ont été victimes d'un gouvernement qui ne respectait ni leurs traditions, ni leurs atouts, ni leurs gouvernance, ni leurs lois, qui a choisi de nier et de miner leurs droits et leur dignité.

Ils ont été victimes d'un gouvernement qui a cherché à réécrire leur histoire distincte, à éradiquer leurs langues et leurs cultures en imposant plutôt des traditions et des modes de vie coloniaux.

Ils ont été victimes d'un gouvernement qui a rejeté la protection du territoire et des eaux préconisée par les Autochtones : le principe de penser toujours aux sept prochaines générations.

Au fond, nous avons rejeté l'idée même que des générations entières d'Autochtones puissent se définir et vivre dans la dignité et la fierté qui leur est dû.

Et nous avons privé le Canada des contributions significatives que ce générations aurai offerts pour faire avancer ensemble notre grand pays.

L'incapacité des gouvernements canadiens successifs à respecter les droits des Autochtones au Canada nous fait grandement honte.

Et pour beaucoup trop d'Autochtones, ce non-respect des droits persiste encore aujourd'hui.

There are, today, children living on reserve in Canada who cannot safely drink, or bathe in, or even play in the water that comes out of their taps.

There are Indigenous parents who say goodnight to their children, and have to cross their fingers in the hopes that their kids won't run away, or take their own lives in the night.

Young Indigenous people in Canada struggle to get a good education.

And though residential schools are thankfully a thing of the past, too many Indigenous youth are still sent away, far from their families, just to get the basic education most Canadians take for granted.

And for far too many Indigenous women, life in Canada includes threats of violence so frequent and severe that Amnesty International has called it “a human rights crisis.”

That is the legacy of colonialism in Canada.

Of a paternalistic Indian Act.

Of the forced relocation of Inuit and First Nations communities, and a systematic denial of Métis rights and history.

Of residential schools that separated children as young as five years old from their families, punished them for speaking their own language, and sought to extinguish Indigenous cultures entirely.

The good news is that Canadians get it. They see the inequities. They're fed up with the excuses.

And that impatience gives us a rare and precious opportunity to act.

We now have before us an opportunity to deliver true, meaningful and lasting reconciliation between Canada and First Nations, the Métis Nation, and Inuit peoples.

Au moment où nous entreprenons de nous réconcilier, nous nous servons, pour nous guider, des normes de base adoptées, dans cette salle, il y a dix ans ce mois-ci.

Je sais que par le passé, l'attitude du Canada à l'égard de la Déclaration des Nations Unies sur les droits des peuples autochtones a été décevante.

On a activement fait campagne et voté contre, pour ensuite l'accepter, sans grand enthousiasme, en disant qu'il s'agissait d'un document « d'aspirations ».

Ce ne sont pas des aspirations. La Déclaration est très concrète pour les Autochtones et ceux qui ont travaillé si fort, pendant si longtemps, pour faire de ce document une réalité.

In the words of Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Declaration provides “the necessary principles, norms, and standards for reconciliation to flourish in twenty-first-century Canada.”

That’s not an aspiration. That’s a way forward.

Last year, at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Canada’s then Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs finally corrected Canada’s position on the Declaration, and announced that we are now a full supporter of the Declaration, without qualification.

In partnership with Indigenous Peoples, we're moving ahead with a thorough review of federal laws, policies, and operational practices, to get our house in order.

To make sure that our government is meeting its obligations, including international obligations under the Declaration.

We know that the world expects Canada to strictly adhere to international human rights standards – including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – and that is what we expect of ourselves, too.

We are working closely with Indigenous Peoples in Canada to better respond to their priorities, to better understand how they see and define self-determination, and to support their work of nation rebuilding.

Along with Indigenous partners, we are co-developing programs to ensure the preservation, protection and revitalization of Métis, Inuit and First Nations languages.

In short, we have been working hard, in partnership with other orders of government, and with Indigenous leaders in Canada, to correct past injustices and bring about a better quality of life for Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

I'll give you a few examples.

Many will sound familiar to you, because they are closely aligned with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals – goals that apply to all of our countries, without exception.

Our efforts include investments to help bring safe and clean drinking water to all Indigenous communities – part of the UN's Sustainable Development Goal #6: clean water and sanitation.

So far, more than two dozen long-term drinking water advisories in Indigenous communities have been eliminated, and we have a plan to bring to an end those that remain.

Ces efforts prennent la forme de nouveaux investissements afin d'éliminer les écarts en matière d'éducation dans les communautés des Premières Nations.

Ces nouveaux accords reconnaissent le pouvoir et l'autorité des Premières Nations.

Ils prévoient également les moyens d'élaborer et de contrôler des systèmes d'éducation – des systèmes dirigés dans les communautés, par les communautés, pour les communautés.

Ces éléments importants concordent avec l'objectif de développement durable 4 : éducation de qualité.

Pour beaucoup d'Autochtones au Canada, ces investissements permettront entre autres de préparer le terrain en vue d'atteindre l'objectif de développement durable 8 : travail décent et croissance économique.

Nous savons que personne ne peut espérer avoir une chance réelle et égale de réussir sans les éléments suivants : une bonne santé; une communauté solide; un bon emploi bien rémunéré; une éducation de qualité et un endroit où vivre qui soit sécuritaire et abordable.

Bien entendu, cela s'applique aux peuples autochtones.

That's why our efforts include working with Indigenous communities to help build and refurbish homes.

Construction work on nearly 4,000 homes has been completed or is underway, helping to fulfill SDG#11: making communities safe and sustainable places to live.

And across the country, we are also working on a National Housing Strategy, to give more Canadians access to housing that is safe, adequate, and affordable.

Our efforts also include a stronger focus – in Indigenous communities, across Canada, and around the world – on SDG #5: combatting gender-based violence and giving women and girls equal opportunities to succeed.

We need women and girls to succeed because that's how we grow stronger economies, and build stronger communities.

That is why our government will be moving forward shortly with legislation to ensure equal pay for work of equal value.

You see, the Sustainable Development Goals are as meaningful in Canada as they are everywhere else in the world, and we are committed to implementing them at home while we also work with our international partners to achieve them around the world.

This is important, because poverty and hunger know no borders. We cannot pretend that these solvable challenges happen only on distant shores.

The need for greater equality and decent work – those are real and persistent human needs. Ones we cannot afford to ignore especially in our own countries.

Il revient à chacun d'entre nous de faire en sorte que tous les gens, y compris les Autochtones, aient de meilleures opportunités.

Nous avons la responsabilité de nous assurer que la véritable égalité soit sans condition.

L'égalité s'applique à chacun d'entre nous. Peu importe notre genre, nos origines, nos croyances, ou la personne que nous choisissons d'aimer.

Et nous avons la responsabilité de mieux prendre soin de l'environnement, que nous partageons tous ... comme je l'ai dit ici à la cérémonie de signature de l'Accord de Paris, « nous sommes tous concernés, dans tous les sens du terme. »

Nous sommes tous responsables, et nos nouvelles façons de faire doivent tenir compte de cette réalité.

In Canada, this means new relationships between the government of Canada and Indigenous Peoples – relationships based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership.

Recently, we made changes to our own government structures, to help with the transition to these new relationships with Indigenous Peoples.

We are dismantling the old colonial bureaucratic structures and creating a new Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, led by Dr. Carolyn Bennett, an experienced and effective advocate for Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

In her new role, she will lead our government's efforts to better support Indigenous Peoples as they strengthen their distinct political, cultural, legal and economic institutions, and assume autonomy over their own affairs, including the recognition and implementation of self-government as an expression of self-determination.

At the same time, we recognize that in Canada, the federal government has a historic responsibility for providing services to Indigenous Peoples, and an ongoing role to play.

To better do this work – while at the same time supporting Indigenous self-determination – we will create, in consultation with Indigenous Peoples, a new Department of Indigenous Services, led by our former Minister of Health, Dr. Jane Philpott.

Over time, programs and services will increasingly be delivered by Indigenous Peoples, as part of their move toward true self-government, and the full implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Nous croyons que cette séparation est le meilleur moyen pour le Canada de respecter davantage ses objectifs en matière de développement durable, tout en donnant suite au principe de l'autodétermination, qui est au cœur de la Déclaration.

Nous avançons en terrain inconnu.

Personne ne nous a précédés sur cette voie.

Mais nous ne pouvons pas nous permettre d'attendre.

Le moment est venu de faire notre propre chemin – ensemble.

Le moment est venu de sortir des sentiers battus, de faire abstraction des limites imposées par de vieilles structures coloniales désuètes pour faire place à la nouveauté, à des structures qui respecteront le droit inhérent des Autochtones à s'autogouverner et à déterminer leur propre avenir.

For the federal government, this means making changes to how we operate. The departmental change I mentioned is part of fulfilling that responsibility.

For Indigenous Peoples, it means taking a hard look at how they define and govern themselves as nations and governments, and how they seek to relate to other orders of government.

Indigenous Peoples will decide how they wish to represent and organize themselves.

Some may choose to engage with our government based on historic nations and treaties, others will use different shared experiences as the basis for coming together.

The choice is theirs. This is precisely what self-determination demands.

Though this path is uncharted, I am confident that we will reach a place of reconciliation.

That we will get to a place as a country where nation-to-nation, government-to-government, and Inuit-Crown relationships can be transformed.

A place where the standards enshrined in the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples are fully realized – not merely by government mandate, but in true partnership with Indigenous Peoples.

[Climate Change]

Part of that new partnership will involve addressing the shared challenge of climate change.

Indigenous and northern communities are particularly affected by its stark reality.

In communities across the north – places like Paulatuk, Kugluktuk [KUG-LOOK-TOOK], and Tuktoyaktuk – where community members are finding sea ice conditions more dangerous and unpredictable for travelling and hunting in the winter.

In Canada's western Arctic, the permafrost is melting and huge pieces of tundra are eroding into the ocean.

And around Baffin Island, Inuit elders are finding it difficult to forecast the weather like they used to. So difficult that many are now reluctant even to try.

At home, we are working hard to help these communities adapt and prepare for the future.

At the international level, our commitment is unwavering.

There is no country on this planet that can walk away from the reality of climate change.

And for our part, Canada will continue to fight for the global plan that has a realistic chance of countering it.

We have a responsibility to future generations, and we will uphold it.

We have a chance to build in Canada – and in fact, all around the world – economies that are clean, that are growing, that are forward-looking. We will not let that opportunity pass us by.

Au Canada, cela veut dire imposer un tarif sur la pollution causée par le carbone. Lorsque c'est bien fait, c'est le moyen le plus efficace de réduire les émissions tout en continuant à faire croître l'économie.

Cela veut aussi dire de continuer à travailler avec d'autres pays pour nous rapprocher des objectifs que nous nous sommes fixés.

La semaine dernière, à Montréal, nous avons accueilli des leaders en matière d'environnement venant de plus de trente pays pour participer à une séance de travail.

C'était l'occasion pour nous de discuter des différents moyens de donner suite à l'Accord de Paris et de maintenir l'élan international vers un avenir plus durable pour tous.

[Growth for the Middle Class; Canada in the World]

Likewise, the global community has a responsibility to do all that it can to reduce inequality within and among countries.

In Canada, we are working hard to achieve this goal.

We improved child benefit payments. Our new program gives nine out of 10 families more money to help with the high cost of raising their kids, and because of that, we expect to reduce child poverty in Canada by 40%.

We raised taxes on the wealthiest one percent so that we could lower them for the middle class, and we're continuing to look for ways to make our tax system more fair.

Right now we have a system that encourages wealthy Canadians to use private corporations to pay a lower tax rate than middle class Canadians.

That's not fair, and we're going to fix it.

Nous faisons des investissements pour rendre l'éducation plus abordable et plus accessible.

Afin que chaque Canadien puisse obtenir la formation nécessaire pour trouver et pour garder un bon emploi, bien rémunéré.

C'est particulièrement important à une époque où l'automatisation remet en question la définition traditionnelle du travail.

À l'échelle internationale, nous avons réaffirmé l'engagement du Canada à réduire la pauvreté et l'inégalité, à mettre l'égalité des sexes et l'autonomisation des femmes et des filles au cœur de nos efforts de développement.

Nous avons adopté cette approche parce que nous savons que soutenir les femmes et les filles mène à la croissance économique. Et que la paix et la coopération prennent ensuite racine.

Les familles et les communautés peuvent alors espérer avoir une meilleure qualité de vie.

We are also working hard to deliver progressive trade agreements like the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement with the European Union, which comes into effect today.

CETA will expand opportunities for businesses; create good, well-paying jobs for workers; and deliver meaningful economic growth – the kind of growth that benefits all our citizens, not just the wealthiest.

We have the opportunity – and I would argue we have the responsibility – to ensure that trade agreements include strong provisions to safeguard workers’ rights, to protect the environment, and to ensure that the benefits of trade are felt more broadly.

Because when we do that, we don’t just grow our economies – we live up to our values.

And we say to ourselves and to each other that good enough ... just isn’t good enough. That better is always possible.

[Conclusion]

Et il est toujours possible de faire mieux quand les gens sont au cœur des décisions que nous prenons.

Les gens – comme nous le rappelle le thème de ce débat général – sont la clé qui nous permet de bâtir un avenir pacifique et prospère.

C'est un avenir auquel nous tenons tous – pour nous, pour nos enfants et nos petits-enfants.

C'est un avenir auquel les Autochtones, au Canada et ailleurs dans le monde, ont le droit de participer – comme partenaires égaux, à part entière.

Et c'est un avenir que nous pouvons bâtir si nous travaillons ensemble.

Our efforts to build a better relationship with Indigenous Peoples in Canada are not only about righting historical wrongs.

They are about listening, and learning, and working together. They are also about concrete action for the future.

The reconciliation we seek has lessons for us all.

We can't build strong relationships if we refuse to have conversations.

We can't chart a more peaceful path if the starting point is suspicion and mistrust.

And we can't build a better world unless we work together, respect our differences, protect the vulnerable, and stand up for the things that matter most.

As I said last year, we know it will be hard work.

But I remain confident – for Canada’s experience shows this to be true – that any challenge can be met if we meet it together.

Thank you.