

**Business**

**FINANCIAL POST**

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Honourable Senators,

Members of the House of Commons,

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are a country whose citizens do not turn back when confronted by obstacles, whatever they are, and never shrink from lending a helping hand to the most disadvantaged, wherever they may be.

Though the effects of the global recession have not fully faded, Canadians are demonstrating a spirit of generosity that is a harbinger of hope to the people of Haiti, the poorest country in the Americas, which has been shaken by a disaster of unprecedented scope.

The world we live in remains strong because of the ties of solidarity that we – women, men and young people – forge among ourselves and because of the care we show toward one another.

As the Vancouver Winter Olympics and upcoming Paralympics remind us, there are also circumstances when festive hearts and the sharing of a common humanity are our greatest hope.

I know Canadians will continue to care, and that spirit of solidarity will redefine their sense of sharing as efforts are made to support the economic recovery.

We gather for a new session of Parliament at a time of both great uncertainty and great optimism. Uncertainty because Canadians still feel the lingering effects of a recession that was not of their making. Optimism because our country has weathered the storm

better than most and because Canadians over the past year have shown the world as never before both our capacity to care and our capability to act.

The agenda our Government laid before Parliament just over one year ago is largely in place. Through Canada's Economic Action Plan, our Government took decisive steps to protect incomes, create jobs, ease credit markets, and help workers and communities get back on their feet. As we begin to see modest improvements in growth and employment, the task before us today is to finish the work begun last year.

Jobs and growth remain the top priority. Our Government will complete the second year of Canada's Economic Action Plan – guided by extensive consultations with leaders in business, industry, and everyday working people and their families – and make refinements where necessary.

At the same time, Canada is poised to emerge from the recession powered by one of the strongest economies in the industrialized world. Therefore, our attention must also encompass the new measures Canada needs for success in the modern economy.

This will require a return to fiscal balance, securing the strong budgetary position that distinguishes our country from so many others.

While the task before us is great, the ingenuity, determination and compassion of Canadians are greater. We will ensure that Canada remains the best place in the world to raise a family. We will continue to stand up for those who built this great country. And we will forge ahead in building a Canada that is strong and united in a changing world.

#### Getting the Job Done: Completing Canada's Economic Action Plan

Canadians have confronted the challenges of the past year in the same way they have always met adversity – with pragmatism, resourcefulness and the spirit of partnership.

From the forest floor to the factory floor, Canadians have rallied in the face of the global recession. Businesses have found new ways to adapt to tighter credit and weaker markets. Workers have shared their jobs to spare colleagues from layoff. Many Canadians, out of work for the first time in their lives, have begun training for a new career. And households across the country have adjusted their finances to account for new realities.

Like Canadians themselves, governments across the country have adapted their approaches and joined together in a concerted effort to soften the impact of the recession.

Canada's Economic Action Plan is working. Tax cuts and enhanced Employment Insurance benefits are providing direct support to Canadians who paid into government programs over the years and now need help.

From coast to coast to coast, almost 16,000 projects are putting Canadians to work while laying the foundation for future prosperity. These projects range from roads and bridges to colleges and universities, from social housing to our cultural and heritage institutions.

Communities and industries most affected by the downturn are being supported. Businesses have begun hiring again, with the economy adding more than 135,000 net new jobs since July 2009. This has restored incomes, confidence and hope for the future for families across the country.

But even as confidence returns to our economy, it would be a mistake to declare that the recession is completely behind us. Too many Canadians still find themselves out of work and events beyond our borders could yet threaten a fragile recovery.

Our Government's top priority is therefore to complete the second year of Canada's Economic Action Plan and to continue creating jobs and growth. Our Government will work with its partners in the provinces and territories to make certain that projects are completed now and over the coming year, when the stimulus is most needed.

Our Government understands the real hardships experienced by Canadian families affected by job loss. Recognizing that unemployment continues to cast a long shadow over the recovery, our Government will continue to work on job creation and job protection. And it will help young Canadians looking to enter today's tough job market for the first time to make the transition to work.

#### Planning for Recovery: Returning to Fiscal Balance

Canadians understand that the events of the past year have required governments everywhere to run budgetary deficits. They also know that because our Government made the responsible choice to pay down debt in good economic times, Canada's debt levels remain by far the smallest in the G7. And they appreciate that this has allowed our country to enact one of the largest stimulus programs in the world without unduly burdening future generations.

At the same time, Canadians live within their means and expect their governments to do the same. Spending designed for a rainy day should not become an all-weather practice.

Canadians also realize that a balanced budget is not an end in itself, but the foundation of a strong and resilient economy. In taking responsible steps to reduce the deficit, our Government will not repeat the mistakes of the past.

Balancing the nation's books will not come at the expense of pensioners. It will not come by cutting transfer payments for health care and education or by raising taxes on hard-working Canadians. These are simply excuses for a federal government to avoid controlling spending.

Our Government's first step toward restoring fiscal balance will be to wind down stimulus spending as economic activity rebounds. It will work with its provincial, territorial and municipal partners to ensure that measures under Canada's Economic Action Plan come to an end by March 31, 2011. And as chair of the G8 and G20 this year, our Government will lead the call for a globally coordinated approach to the withdrawal of economic stimulus.

The second step toward restoring fiscal balance will be to restrain federal program spending overall, while **protecting growth in transfers that directly benefit Canadians, such as pensions, health care and education.**

\* Our Government will lead by example, introducing legislation to freeze the salaries of the Prime Minister, Ministers, Members of Parliament and Senators.

\* It will freeze the overall budget of Ministers' offices and calls on Members of both Houses of Parliament to do the same.

\* It will freeze departmental operating budgets, that is, the total amount spent on salaries, administration and overhead.

\* It will launch a review of administrative services to improve their efficiency and eliminate duplication.

\* It will aggressively review all departmental spending to ensure value for money and tangible results.

\* Our Government will also eliminate unnecessary appointments to federal agencies, boards, commissions and Crown corporations.

### Building the Jobs and Industries of the Future

Industry and ingenuity have been the hallmarks of Canada's economy since the beginning. Aboriginal peoples, voyageurs and pioneers established the backbone of our modern trading nation. Immigrants armed only with dreams and determination travelled west to open the land that would become our breadbasket. Bright minds with bold ideas transformed sound and electricity into the communications network that links our world.

But today we face new challenges. Determined new competitors are rising. The relentless pace of technology means that every day there is something newer, faster, better. To succeed in the global economy, Canada must keep step as the world races forward.

Our strategy is clear: we must combine the best of our intellectual and natural resources to create jobs, growth and opportunity.

\* The success of Canada's economy depends on a skilled and educated workforce. Through Canada's Economic Action Plan, our Government will continue to provide

enhanced support for skills, apprenticeships and training for Canadian workers. It will make timely information on labour market opportunities available for all Canadians, especially in the area of the skilled trades. It will expand the opportunities for our top graduates to pursue post-doctoral studies and to commercialize their ideas.

\* Our Government will also work hand-in-hand with Aboriginal communities and provinces and territories to reform and strengthen education, and to support student success and provide greater hope and opportunity.

\* To fuel the ingenuity of Canada's best and brightest and bring innovative products to market, our Government will build on the unprecedented investments in Canada's Economic Action Plan by bolstering its Science and Technology Strategy. It will launch a digital economy strategy to drive the adoption of new technology across the economy. To encourage new ideas and protect the rights of Canadians whose research, development and artistic creativity contribute to Canada's prosperity, our Government will also strengthen laws governing intellectual property and copyright.

\* Canada has been a spacefaring nation for nearly 50 years. Our Government will extend support for advanced research, development and prototyping of new space-based technologies, especially in support of Arctic sovereignty.

\* Low taxes are already helping Canada attract the investment needed to turn ideas into products and services. Our Government will keep tax rates competitive and low, while taking aggressive steps to close unfair tax loopholes that allow a few businesses and individuals to take advantage of hard-working Canadians who pay their fair share.

\* Our Government will open Canada's doors further to venture capital and to foreign investment in key sectors, including the satellite and telecommunications industries, giving Canadian firms access to the funds and expertise they need. While safeguarding Canada's national security, our Government will ensure that unnecessary regulation does not inhibit the growth of Canada's uranium mining industry by unduly restricting foreign investment. It will also expand investment promotion in key markets.

\* Ensuring the broadest possible market for Canada's goods and services will require the aggressive pursuit of free trade. Our Government will implement free trade agreements with Peru and the European Free Trade Association and ask Parliament to ratify new agreements with Colombia, Jordan and Panama. Given the disappointing results of the Doha round of multilateral trade negotiations and the rapidly evolving global marketplace, our Government will aggressively diversify opportunities for Canadian business through bilateral trade agreements. It will continue trade negotiations with the European Union, India, the Republic of Korea, the Caribbean Community and other countries of the Americas. Building on the successful negotiation of new or expanded air agreements with 50 countries around the world, our Government will pursue additional agreements to achieve more competition, more choice for Canadians and more economic growth.

\* Our Government will also build upon the recent agreement that gives Canadian companies permanent access to state and local government procurement in the United States.

Canada's strategy for economic success must leverage our considerable strengths, in particular our world-leading financial industry and energy resource endowment.

\* The unique strength of Canada's financial industry set Canada apart during the global financial crisis. The World Economic Forum, among others, has recognized Canada's banking system as the strongest in the world. Our Government will build upon this advantage to make Canada an even stronger world financial centre. Recognizing the critical importance of sound securities regulation – both to attract investment and crack down on white-collar crime – our Government will act, within the ambit of the Constitution, to create a Canadian securities regulator.

\* Our energy resource endowment provides Canada with an unparalleled economic advantage that we must leverage to secure our place as a clean energy superpower and a leader in green job creation. We are the world's seventh largest crude oil producer with the second largest proven reserves. We are the third largest natural gas producer, the third largest hydroelectric generator, the largest producer of uranium, and by far the largest supplier of energy resources to the world's largest marketplace. To support responsible development of Canada's energy and mineral resources, our Government will untangle the daunting maze of regulations that needlessly complicates project approvals, replacing it with simpler, clearer processes that offer improved environmental protection and greater certainty to industry.

\* Our Government will continue to invest in clean energy technologies. It will review energy efficiency and emissions-reduction programs to ensure they are effective. And it will position Canada's nuclear industry to capitalize on the opportunities of the global nuclear renaissance – beginning with the restructuring of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited.

Finally, our strategy for the economy must create the conditions for continued success in the industries that are the foundation for Canada's prosperity and support thousands of communities, both rural and urban.

\* Our Government will partner with the forest industry to enter new markets and deploy new technologies, while respecting the Softwood Lumber Agreement with the United States.

\* It will introduce new legislation to reform Canada's outdated system of fisheries management.

\* It will take steps to support a competitive livestock industry and pursue market access for agricultural products. Our Government will also ensure the freedom of choice for

which Western barley farmers overwhelmingly voted, and it will continue to defend supply management of dairy and poultry products.

\* Small and medium-sized businesses are the engines of the Canadian economy, responsible for the creation of most new jobs. To support them, our Government will continue to identify and remove unnecessary, job-killing regulation and barriers to growth.

\* It will take further steps to support the competitiveness of Canadian manufacturers. And recognizing the strategic importance of a strong domestic shipbuilding industry, it will continue to support the industry's sustainable development through a long-term approach to federal procurement.

\* Our Government will also explore ways to better protect workers when their employers go bankrupt.

### Making Canada the Best Place for Families

Regardless of profession or trade, of industry or region, Canadians have always striven toward a common objective – to make a home and nurture a family. For many Canadians, there can be no greater accomplishment than to provide for their children, to contribute to the local community, and to live in a safe and secure country. Our Government shares and supports these aspirations.

To help Canadian families to balance work and family life, our Government introduced the Universal Child Care Benefit to provide \$100 per month for each child under the age of six. This is direct financial support to working families that gives them the freedom to choose the best child care for them. Our Government will strengthen this benefit for sole-support, single-parent families.

Protecting the health and safety of Canadians and their families is a priority of our Government. This commitment was reflected in its decision to secure the H1N1 vaccine for every Canadian. To assure parents that their children's food, medicine and toys are safe, our Government will reintroduce legislation to protect Canadian families from unsafe food, drug and consumer products. Our Government will respect the wishes of Canadians by reintroducing the consumer product safety legislation in its original form.

Our Government will continue to strengthen Canada's food safety system.

It will ensure that families have the information they need to make informed choices and it will hold those who produce, import and sell goods in Canada accountable for the safety of Canadians.

To prevent accidents that harm our children and youth, our Government will also work in partnership with non-governmental organizations to launch a national strategy on childhood injury prevention.

Just as we know that parents are in the best position to make decisions for their families, the best solutions to the diverse challenges confronting Canada's communities are often found locally. Every day, the power of innovation is seen at work in communities across this country, as citizens, businesses and charitable groups join forces to tackle local problems.

Too often, however, grassroots efforts are hobbled by red tape. Too often, local solutions are denied access to government assistance because they do not fit the bureaucratic definition of the problem. Too often, the efforts of communities falter not on account of a lack of effort or heart, but because of a lack of expertise to turn good ideas into reality.

- \* Our Government will take steps to support communities in their efforts to tackle local challenges.

- \* It will look to innovative charities and forward-thinking private-sector companies to partner on new approaches to many social challenges.

- \* To recognize the enormous contribution volunteers make to Canada, our Government will also establish a prime ministerial award for volunteerism.

Our communities are built on the rule of law, the cornerstone of peace, order and good government. The law must protect everyone, and those who commit crimes must be held to account. Canadians want a justice system that delivers justice. We know we can protect ourselves without compromising the values that define our country.

Our Government acted decisively to crack down on crime and ensure the safety and security of our neighbourhoods and communities. It introduced laws mandating prison sentences for gun crimes, toughening sentencing for dangerous criminals, raising to 16 from 14 the age of protection from adult sexual predators, and ensuring that criminals serve sentences that reflect the severity of their crimes.

Our Government will now focus on the further protection of children, women and victims of **white-collar crime**.

- \* It will protect the most vulnerable members of society: our children. It will introduce legislation to increase the penalties for sexual offences against children as well as legislation to strengthen the sex offender registry. It will protect children from Internet luring and cyber abuse.

- \* Our Government will also ensure the youth criminal justice system responds strongly to those few who commit serious and violent crimes, while focusing on the rehabilitation of all young offenders.

- \* Our Government will propose laws ensuring that for multiple murderers, life means life and requiring that violent offenders serve their time in jail, not in the luxury of home. It will reintroduce tough legislation to combat the organized criminal drug trade. Our

Government will respect the will of Canadians by reintroducing this legislation in its original form.

\* Our Government will take additional action to address the disturbing number of unsolved cases of murdered and missing Aboriginal women. The Sisters in Spirit initiative has drawn particular attention to this pressing criminal justice priority.

\* Our Government will also introduce legislation to crack down on white-collar crime and secure justice for victims through tougher sentences. Hard-working Canadians who entrust their retirement savings to others have a right to see that trust honoured.

Justice must be effective, swift and true. It must also be fair to victims of crime.

\* To ensure justice is effective, our Government will introduce legislation to give police investigative powers for the twenty-first century. Canada's police officers and chiefs have asked for these vital tools to stay ahead of the tactics adopted by today's criminals.

\* To ensure justice is delivered swiftly, our Government will introduce legislation to improve criminal procedures to cut the number of long, drawn-out trials.

\* Our Government will also offer tangible support to innocent victims of crime and their families. It will give families of murder victims access to special benefits under Employment Insurance. It will introduce legislation to give employees of federally regulated industries the right to unpaid leave if they or members of their families are victimized by crime. And our Government will introduce legislation to make the victim surcharge mandatory, to better fund victim services.

Just as criminals threaten Canadians' personal safety, terrorists threaten our country's security. Our peaceful, prosperous and pluralistic society is one of the safest places in the world to live. Yet Canada faces real, significant and shifting threats. Our Government will take steps to safeguard Canada's national security.

\* It will make travel by air safer by employing the latest screening practices and detection technologies for passengers and cargo. While the costs of air security must be borne by businesses and individuals who use air transport, our Government will ensure their contribution is invested responsibly and effectively, and delivers measurable results.

\* It will introduce a new biometric passport that will significantly improve security.

\* It will modernize the judicial tools employed to fight terrorism and organized crime.

\* Working with provinces, territories and the private sector, our Government will implement a cyber-security strategy to protect our digital infrastructure.

Standing Up for Those Who Helped Build Canada

Canadians believe sacrifice and hard work should be recognized. As we strive to create an even better future for our families and communities, our Government will stand up for those who built and defended this country.

Superior health care and quality of life mean that Canadians now enjoy one of the longest life expectancies in the world. As more and more Canadians enter their golden years, our Government will seek to enhance their well-being during the retirement that they have earned. This demographic shift poses a challenge to the sustainability of our social programs and our economy. Our Government will meet the demands of the aging population.

Our Government has taken numerous measures to assure our senior citizens that Canada's retirement income system is the strongest in the world. Among other measures, our Government has introduced Tax Free Savings Accounts and income splitting for Canada's pensioners.

\* To support seniors and those planning for retirement, our Government will continue to work with the provinces and territories on options to further strengthen Canada's retirement income system.

\* In recognition of the contributions seniors make to society, our Government will support legislation establishing Seniors Day.

Just as generations of Canadians worked on the home front to build this great country, so too have generations of veterans fought to defend Canada and Canadian values around the world. We are reminded of the bravery and sacrifice of those who serve in our armed forces as we celebrate this year's centenary of the Royal Canadian Navy and as we mark the passing of John Henry Foster Babcock, the last surviving Canadian veteran of World War I. A national day of commemoration will be held on Vimy Ridge Day, April 9, to celebrate the contribution his generation made to the cause of freedom.

Today, however, a new generation of men and women in uniform continues to stand up for the values and principles Canadians hold dear. In Afghanistan, the Canadian Forces prepare for the end of the military mission in 2011 with the knowledge that – through great sacrifice and with great distinction – their efforts saved Kandahar province from falling back under Taliban control. After 2011, our effort in Afghanistan will focus on development and humanitarian aid.

In Haiti, the Canadian Forces have taken the lessons learned in Afghanistan and put them to use in very different circumstances. Their speed and effectiveness in deployment were and are unsurpassed in the world.

To serve Canada in the profession of arms is an extraordinary and honourable acceptance of risks, many of which cannot be foreseen, and all of which may have profound personal consequences for those who assume them. Our Government has supported our men and women in uniform not only in words, but by making the investments necessary to rebuild

Canada's military. Our Government will continue to stand up for our military and our veterans.

\* Our Government will change the unfair rules restricting access to benefits under Employment Insurance for military families who have paid into the system for years.

\* To further commemorate the sacrifices of our armed forces, our Government will bring individuals, groups and businesses together to build community war memorials.

\* Our Government has established the New Veterans Charter and an ombudsman, expanded the Veterans Independence Program and, in recognition of the gallant service of Allied veterans who fought alongside Canadian troops during the Second World War and the Korean War, reinstated benefits under the War Veterans Allowance Act. Our Government will continue to modernize support systems for Canadian veterans.

Honouring those who built this country includes recognizing the contribution of those who make their living on the land and the realities of rural life in Canada. Our Government will continue to support legislation to repeal the wasteful and ineffective long-gun registry that targets law-abiding farmers and hunters, not criminals.

Our Government also recognizes the contributions of Canada's Aboriginal people. Too often, their stories have been ones of sorrow. Our Government will continue to build on its historic apology for the treatment of children in residential schools.

\* After settling 17 specific claims since this Parliament began, it will continue to work to resolve additional claims.

\* Having made safe drinking water and effective waste-water treatment on-reserve a national priority, our Government will introduce new legislative measures to further this goal.

\* It is only 50 years ago that Aboriginal people in Canada were granted the right to vote. To further protect the rights of Aboriginal people, particularly women living on-reserve, our Government will take steps to ensure the equitable distribution of real property assets in the event of death, divorce or separation. It will also introduce legislation to comply with a recent court decision in order to address gender inequality under the Indian Act.

### Strengthening a United Canada in a Changing World

Our values as Canadians are rooted in our history and in our institutions. Our parliamentary democracy, which brought together people of many lands, faiths and languages to live in harmony. Our federal system, which recognizes our differences, while advancing our unity. Our official languages. Our northern landscape.

We are a country whose story is still being written. Last month, Canadians took pride in the inspired performances of our Olympic athletes at the Winter Games in Vancouver and

cheered when Alexandre Bilodeau won our first ever Olympic gold medal on our own soil. But our athletes did not stop at just one. They surpassed the record for the most gold medals ever won at a Winter Olympics. We are proud of our medallists and the entire Canadian Olympic team. Next week, the Paralympic Games will officially begin and again we will cheer as our athletes take on the world. Our Government will continue to invest in world-class Canadian athletics.

A shared understanding of Canadian history unites us as citizens. Two years ago, we celebrated the 400th anniversary of the founding of Quebec City. This year we mark the quadricentenary of the settling of Cupids, Newfoundland and Labrador. Two years hence, our Government will engage millions of citizens and strengthen knowledge and pride in Canada by commemorating the bicentennial of the War of 1812, an event that was key to shaping our identity as Canadians and ultimately our existence as a country. That year Canadians will also celebrate the 60th anniversary of the accession of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada, and our Government has established a Diamond Jubilee Committee to prepare for this historic occasion. Our Government will also ask Parliament to examine the original gender-neutral English wording of the national anthem.

We are a country founded on democracy. Our shared values and experiences must be reflected in our national institutions, starting with Parliament. To reflect the growing number of Canadians living in Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta, our Government will follow through on its commitment to address their under-representation, consistent with the fundamental, democratic, constitutional principle of representation by population in the House of Commons. It will propose legislation to increase voter participation by expanding advance voting in elections. Our Government also remains committed to Senate reform and will continue to pursue measures to make the upper chamber more democratic, effective and accountable.

Our Government recognizes the Public Service of Canada as a critical national institution. Our Government will continue to support the renewal of the Public Service and ensure it is ready for the changes required by the aging of its own and the wider Canadian labour force.

We are a bilingual country. Canada's two official languages are an integral part of our history and position us uniquely in the world. Building on the recognition that the Québécois form a nation within a united Canada, and the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality, our Government will take steps to strengthen further Canada's francophone identity. It will also continue to respect provincial jurisdiction and to restrict the use of the federal spending power.

We are a country with an Aboriginal heritage. A growing number of states have given qualified recognition to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Our Government will take steps to endorse this aspirational document in a manner fully consistent with Canada's Constitution and laws.

We are a country of immigrants. Our identities are bound up in the stories of ancestors from hundreds of lands. To share these stories, our Government will introduce legislation to establish Pier 21 in Halifax – the site where so many began their Canadian journey – as Canada’s National Museum of Immigration. It will continue to work with the provinces to strengthen recognition of foreign credentials through the Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications. To better protect would-be immigrants, our Government will take steps to shut down unscrupulous immigration consultants. Our Government will also introduce legislation to speed up the revocation of citizenship of those who have concealed their war crimes.

We are a country of refuge. For those victimized by disaster in their homeland or facing persecution by their own governments, Canada is a beacon. When disaster struck in Haiti, our Government accelerated the adoption process for Haitian orphans. And it is allowing Haitians temporarily in Canada to extend their stays. To remove the years of uncertainty often faced by refugees in genuine need, while closing off avenues for those simply seeking a back door into the country, our Government will propose comprehensive reforms to the refugee system. It supports the establishment of a National Monument to the Victims of Communism and it will support legislation to establish a national Holocaust memorial.

We are a northern country. Canadians are deeply influenced by the vast expanse of our Arctic and its history and legends. Our Government established the Northern Strategy to realize the potential of Canada’s North for northerners and all Canadians.

- \* It will create a world-class High Arctic Research Station.

- \* The Joint Review Panel on the Mackenzie Gas Project has completed its report. Our Government will reform the northern regulatory regime to ensure that the region’s resource potential can be developed where commercially viable while ensuring a better process for protecting our environment.

- \* It will continue to give northerners a greater say over their own future and take further steps toward territorial devolution.

- \* Our Government will continue to vigorously defend Canada’s Arctic sovereignty. It will continue to map our northern resources and waters. It will take action to increase marine safety and reduce pollution from shipping and other maritime traffic.

- \* Our Government will also work with other northern countries to settle boundary disagreements.

We are a country of unparalleled natural beauty. To further protect and preserve the diversity and health of our natural environment, our Government will bolster its Action Plan on Clean Water. And it will build on the creation of more than 85,000 square kilometres of national parks and marine conservation areas as part of its national conservation plan.

We are a country that stands up for what is right in the world. Canadians want their Government to do what is right, not what is popular. They want their country to carry its share of the work in international affairs, not just talk about it. And they want their Government to make only those commitments it intends to keep.

In the debate among nations, our Government will pursue a foreign policy that responds to changing times but remains anchored in Canadian values and an enlightened view of sovereignty that recognizes that national interests are often interconnected.

\* Through our leadership this year of the North American, G8 and G20 summits, our Government will advocate greater investment in maternal and child health in developing countries. It will continue to push for stronger financial market regulation, modelled after Canada's world-leading practices. And it will oppose trade protectionism in all its guises.

\* Our Government will use its voice to speak on behalf of Canada's commitment to global security and human rights.

\* Recognizing the danger posed by the proliferation of nuclear materials and technology to global peace and security, our Government will support the initiatives of President Obama and participate fully in the landmark Nuclear Security Summit in Washington in April.

Nowhere is a commitment to principled policy, backed by action, needed more than in addressing climate change. Our Government has advocated for an agreement that includes all the world's major greenhouse gas emitters, for that is the only way to actually reduce global emissions. And it has pursued a balanced approach to emissions reduction that recognizes the importance of greening the economy for tomorrow and protecting jobs today.

The Copenhagen Accord reflects these principles and is fully supported by the Government of Canada. Together with other industrialized countries, Canada will provide funding to help developing economies reduce their emissions and adapt to climate change. Here at home, our Government will continue to take steps to fight climate change by leading the world in clean electricity generation. And recognizing our integrated continental economic links, our Government will work to reduce emissions through the Canada-U.S. Clean Energy Dialogue launched last year with President Obama's administration.

## Conclusion

Honourable Members of the Senate and Members of the Commons, you are charged with a most important task – to give voice to the values, concerns and aspirations of Canadians.

This is a year when the eyes of the world are on Canada.

A year in which our athletes are excelling here at home at the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

A year in which Canada will host world leaders at the North American, G8 and G20 summits.

A year in which Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II will celebrate Canada Day with Canadians.

A year in which Canadians are leading the way in humanitarian efforts in Haiti, just as they are standing for freedom – at great cost – in Afghanistan.

And it is a year during which the Canadian economy is emerging from recession as one of the strongest and most resilient in the developed world.

These are all things of which Canadians can be justifiably proud.

They remind every Canadian that our citizenship is more than a contract to pay taxes in exchange for government services. To be Canadian is to show the world that people drawn from every nation can live in harmony. To seek peace but stand on guard for rights, democracy and the rule of law. To be resolute in confronting a global crisis and ambitious in planning for a more prosperous future.

The future to which Canadians aspire will not arrive by chance. Grand visions for a nation's future will come to nothing if not balanced by the means to pay for them. To realize the hopes Canadians hold for themselves and their families, the economy must remain our Government's single most urgent priority. Hope is borne on the wings of prosperity.

That is why tomorrow our Government will present a budget focused on jobs and growth – now and for the future.

Honourable Members, let us join together to build a stronger Canada and a stronger economy.

As you set about this vital work, I pray that Divine Providence guide you in your deliberations.

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