# THE CONTINUATION OF A STRATEGIC ALLIANCE BETWEEN CCMARD AND CRRF

**The Canadian Race Relations Foundation** is Canada's leading agency dedicated to the elimination of racism and the promotion of harmonious race relations in the country. Created as part of the historic Japanese Canadian Redress Agreement, the Foundation's governing legislation, the Canadian Race Relations Foundation Act, was given Royal Assent on February 1, 1991. The Act was proclaimed by the Federal Government on October 28, 1996, and the Foundation opened its doors in 1997. The Foundation's origin, mission and vision outline our direction and activities.

The Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF) is an organization dedicated to fostering harmonious race relations across Canada. From its inception, the CRRF has recognized the importance of partnerships in achieving and fulfilling its important mandate. It is with this in mind that the CRRF became an active and proud partner with the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CCMARD). As the first signatory to the Coalition, the CRRF recognized that a strategic alliance with CCMARD was an important step towards the fulfillment of its goals of positive change, the elimination of racism and discrimination, and the promotion of a harmonious Canada.

Canada is becoming an ever increasingly diverse country — with various ethnic, religious and linguistic groups, the majority of whom will live in urban settings. As such, a focus on municipalities with the clear objectives set by CCMARD as an action plan is crucial. Improving social cohesion through investment in policies and programs has been identified as essential if Canada is to be recognized a global leader. Fostering diversity while promoting intercultural understanding has been the basis of reaching such an objective. There is no doubt that municipalities right across Canada are key in the development of social cohesion and harmony as it is within these urban settings that Canada's diverse groups come together to work and learn, and to live their lives.

CCMARD, through its partnerships, is uniquely placed to help in this crucial task. The number of municipalities that have taken the steps to join the Coalition, now just over sixty, is simply one illustration of the organization's success since its launch. By continuing to welcome new signatory municipalities into its midst and encouraging the sharing of resources and best practices, it has become a key source of information.

As just one example, the CCMARD toolkit which was developed in 2012 as an easy-to-use resource was a project the CRRF was proud to partner with. Thanks to such initiatives, municipalities across Canada have made great strides in developing and implementing their own unique plans of action. The toolkit has provided a useful guide and resource on the long and continuing road to harmonious relations.

As we build towards celebrating Canada's 150th birthday in 2017, the CCRF has renewed its focus commitment to strengthening Canadian values. Its strategic alliance with CCMARD will continue to be an important link by which a presence on the local, regional and national levels can be increased and through which partners can come together and share dialogue about positive change. Whether through the examination of best practices, developing resources or forums in which to continue the dialogue, the CRRF will continue to work with CCMARD as a valued and strategic partner.