Interview with

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The Government of Canada frequently speaks of "Canadian Values." What do you believe these values include? To what extent are these values uniquely Canadian? To what extent are they more universally shared by liberal democracies and across major world religions?

Canadians are no different than citizens of other liberal democracies in their commitment to the values of freedom, justice, equality and the rule of law. These are universal values, not simply Canadian values. When we talk about «Canadian values», I think we mean the unique way Canadians express liberal democratic values – a way that has been shaped by Canada's distinct history and struggles.

In Canada, the rule of law is expressed in our constitution as «peace, order, and good government.» In times of tragedy and conflict, we see how important this enduring value is to Canadians.

We share the value of freedom with our American neighbours but the expression of that freedom continues to take a very different form in Canada, where the balancing of individual and collective freedom means that citizens are able to choose who they want to be, and to embrace multiple identities and attachments. The value Canadians now place on mutual accommodation, respect for diversity and civility has its origin in part in the centuries of dialogue and negotiation between Canada's Aboriginal peoples, French and British settlers, and the generations of settlers that followed.

In the same way, justice and equality are values shared by all liberal democracies, but they take on a unique expression in Canada. While other factors are important, Canada's harsh climate, vast landscape, thinly spread-out population, and proximity to the United States have meant that Canadians need to act deliberately and collectively in order to survive. This has contributed to Canadians' sense of mutual responsibility and reciprocity – values that are now reflected in our health care, educational, and other major social and cultural institutions.

These are just a few examples of ways that our unique history and struggles have shaped who we are and the expression of our liberal democratic values. We would need historians, sociologists and other story tellers to tell the full story.

In this context, I would like to mention the recent study by the Canadian Policy Research Network (CPRN) in partnership with the Department of Canadian Heritage, entitled *Citizens' Dialogue on Canada's Future: A 21st Century Social Contract*. One of the more interesting findings was citizens' desire to articulate a set of core Canadian values. Citizens from in and around ten cities across Canada and representatives from a range of diversity groups identified six core Canadian values: shared community – i.e. despite their differences, Canadians have a unique bond; equity and justice – i.e. each person is respected, valued, and treated the same; respect for diversity – i.e. we value the contributions of all Canada's cultures and traditions; mutual responsibility – i.e. with rights, each citizen has responsibilities; accountability; and democracy – i.e. citizens take ownership of government.

What role does the Government of Canada play in shaping and articulating values?

As a country with such great geographical, regional, linguistic, and cultural diversity, in close proximity to an economic and cultural giant to the south, Canada has never been able to take its existence for granted. Canadians have had to be deliberate about building Canada, about making connections, and fostering a sense of country.

The Government of Canada has played a central role. Over the years, it has been a key instrument for accommodating and balancing the interests of diverse groups and regions, of fostering connections among Canadians, and of articulating the shared values of Canadians.

We have done this through our constitution and legal framework, our Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and our federal system. We have done this through institutions such as the national railway, the Trans-Canada highway, the CBC, through exchanges, and now through our use of the Internet. We have done this through policies such as universal health care, official bilingualism, official multiculturalism, Canadian content regulations, and other defining Government initiatives.

As we confront the challenges of globalization, it will be more important than ever for the Government of Canada to help Canadians articulate their values and who they are. We saw this in health care reform, where the Romanow Report identified values as the foundation for moving forward. We see this in our approach to international terrorism, where our values of multilateralism have been our guideposts. We see this in our approach to humanitarian aid where mutual

responsibility has become Canada's answer to global instability and security.

Key to these efforts to articulate Canadian values has been the Government's engagement with Canadians on values. Our foreign policy review is a good example of such engagement. The Government must continue this dialogue with Canadians across the spectrum of issues.

What responsibilities do all citizens have in Canada?

Canadians have rights but they also have responsibilities. Indeed, responsibilities underlie and sustain our rights.

I have talked about the profound freedom we have in Canada to be who one chooses to be and to enjoy multiple identities and attachments. For instance, we encourage new Canadians to bring their stories and traditions to Canada, to maintain and sustain them, and to share them with Canadians. We are learning, especially through our experience with Aboriginal communities, that communities with a stronger sense of identity and tradition are stronger and can contribute more confidently to Canada's economic, social and cultural life.

Accommodation and respect for diversity did not arise out of the blue, however. They evolved out of Canada's heritage and traditions. They are premised on core values such as the dignity of the individual, the rule of law and peaceful resolution of conflict. Canadians, including new Canadians, need to be encouraged to have a deeper understanding of these core values and to understand and participate in the Institutions that sustain them. They need to be encouraged to see that respect for diversity is coupled with certain responsibilities. Just as the traditions of new Canadians enrich, and are respected by, other Canadians, new Canadians must learn and respect Canadian traditions and history.

It is in recognition of that principle that the Immigration and the Refugee Protection Act, proclaimed in 2001, includes in its objectives the recognition that the integration of immigrants involves mutual obligations for new immigrants and members of Canadian society.

Again, in this context, it is worth noting the study I mentioned earlier concerning *Citizens' Dialogue on Canada's Future: A 21st Century Social Contract*. Canadians surveyed clearly stated the expectations they have for their fellow citizens. They expect each other to contribute to Canada's quality of life through paid employment, family and volunteer work and self-development, each to the highest level they are capable.

How does the programming of the Department of Canadian Heritage contribute to fostering attachment to Canada? Does our inclusive national identity help or hinder this process? Does globalization, cosmopolitanism, and dual/multiple citizenship threaten a sense of shared Canadian citizenship?

Canadians, like citizens of other countries, are attached to their country and to one another because of relationships of trust that have been built up over the years. Some of these relationships are based on shared stories, myths and symbols; some are built upon shared experiences established through connections between citizens; some are built upon shared values and a sense of common purpose.

In Canada, the stories, myths and symbols, the connections we have with one another, and shared values all contribute to a sense of attachment. Canadians have some national stories, myths and symbols, but because of Canada's cultural and geographical diversity, they perhaps do not have the same kind of national resonance that comparable stories would have in countries like France or Japan. Equally, Canada's great distances makes connections and shared experiences difficult to forge; indeed many Canadians will never have a chance to see Canadians in other parts of the country. And, as I said before, perhaps more than most countries, a key source of our relationships of trust in Canada are shared values.

Canadians have had to be deliberate about building Canada, about making connections, and fostering a sense of country.

The programming at Canadian Heritage is directly focused on strengthening these crucial elements of attachment, namely to promote the sharing of the diverse stories, myths and symbols of Canada, to foster connections among Canadians, especially across diverse communities, and to promote and affirm the shared values and civic relationships that bring Canadians together.

Together, these elements contribute to a model of shared citizenship, where the diversity of our peoples and their stories and perspectives are seen as a strength and where shared values act as a kind of glue. In this unique model of citizenship, Canadians do not fear diversity and cosmopolitanism brought on by globalization. On the contrary, our model positions us well to make diversity and cosmopolitanism our comparative advantage in the new globalized economy.

To realize this opportunity, however, we must be vigilant about strengthening the elements of our shared citizenship: namely, the diverse cultural stories we share and the capacity to participate and have access to Canada's cultural life, the connections we have with one another and especially our shared values, including the rights and responsibilities of civic life in Canada.

I would like to comment on an important contribution we have made to these goals. I recently hosted a forum on diversity and culture which brought together people from diverse communities with decision makers from the cultural sector. The aim of the Forum was to address how we can build a stronger Canada by opening up equitable access to all of the programs and services reflected through our government's investment in cultural expressions. The Forum signals our efforts to investigate how to eliminate systemic barriers in programs and services, how to create strong bonds in communities, how to invest in capacity building to enable diverse expression and the telling of stories, how to contribute to better representation of all facets of our communities in our institutions and how to establish

the means by which we can monitor and hold ourselves accountable to the progress we will make in the future.

It has been suggested that participation in decision-making processes is a key responsibility of citizens. We note the lack of strong analysis on ethnic, racial and religious minority participation in the Canadian Elections Survey and in other research and wonder, how does the Government of Canada identify barriers and work to remove them?

Yes, I believe that to build the kind of democratic society we want in Canada, we need the active participation of citizens in decisions that affect our collective future – not only in elections but in all forms of political processes, public institutions, governance structures and voluntary work. In order to better understand and overcome the barriers to full participation, the Government of Canada draws on many sources, of which surveys are just one example. To be useful, we need adequate sample sizes to do the kind of in-depth analysis you are talking about. We also need to ask the right questions. But more importantly, we need effective partnerships.

Key to these efforts to articulate Canadian values has been the Government's engagement with Canadians on values.

For example, the Metropolis Project, which is funded by a consortium of federal partners including Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Canadian Heritage, is an exciting example of how the research, policy and NGO communities can collaborate on interdisciplinary and policy-relevant research, including important issues of civic participation in a diverse society.

Another promising partnership is the Ethnic Diversity Survey, a joint effort of Canadian Heritage and Statistics Canada. When the results of this innovative post-census survey are released in the Fall of 2003, we will have a more comprehensive picture of the ethnic and cultural background of people in Canada and how it relates to their lives. By measuring the attitudes, civic involvement and social interactions of participants, the survey will help the Government of Canada better understand the barriers to cross-cultural understanding and greater civic participation by ethnic and religious minorities.

Regional identity and attachment play strong roles in Canada. How do grant and contribution programs distributed to communities across the country facilitate participation? An attachment to Canada?

It has been my observation that Canadians are at the same time profoundly attached to their local communities and to their country. This is one of the strengths of our Canadian model. In this country, a person can have multiple identities and multiple attachments and still feel proudly Canadian.

Questions of regional and community identity are of course important to Canadians but my focus is always on the federal role. How do we connect Canadians in communities from sea to sea to sea in meaningful ways? How do we build bridges across differences and distances and promote understanding? How do we ensure everyone has opportunities to participate in Canada's cultural and civic life?

Canadian Heritage, including our family of portfolio agencies, delivers services directly to Canadians and we also work with national, regional and local organisational partners to achieve results. Whatever the focus of our programs – the arts, cultural industries, official languages, sport, parks, heritage or youth – our overarching purpose is to contribute to building an inclusive society where our diversity is a creative advantage, where differences are respected and all citizens have a role in shaping Canada's future.

For example, the funding assistance offered by Canadian Heritage's Multiculturalism Program has supported several hundred community groups across this country in their targeted efforts to promote collaboration, dialogue and understanding among Canadians from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The Program also works to bring down barriers created by racism, intolerance and hate through efforts such as our annual March 21st campaign.

In the area of official languages, we help to ensure the ability of Canadians to participate in their official language through support for minority language education and the development of minority language communities. We also promote opportunities for Canadians to appreciate the value of our linguistic duality and learn a second language.

Canadian Heritage received $9 million over three years in the wake of September 11 to foster interfaith and inter-community connections. How were the resources spent in the first year and did they successfully foster inter-faith and inter-community connections?

As we have seen, world events and intercultural tensions can have significant impacts domestically. In a country as diverse as Canada, it is more important than ever that we strengthen the connections that promote our understanding of each other and of core values. This requires us to take a new approach to implementing Canada's Multiculturalism policy, one that emphasizes mutually reinforcing themes of combatting racism and discrimination, institutions that reflect Canada's diversity, shared citizenship and cross-cultural understanding.

The funding provided last year enabled Canadian Heritage's Interdepartmental Committee on Public Education to support projects in four key areas: policing in a multicultural society; community cohesion; education and youth initiatives and diversity and culture. Assessing the success of these projects requires us to look at both the immediate tangible outcomes as well as some longer-term impacts on community relations and levels of trust.

For example, in February 2003, Canadian Heritage with the RCMP organized the *Policing in a Multicultural Society Forum* which brought together members of the police and ethnocultural communities for dialogue and sharing of best practices. The concrete outcomes of this forum included enhanced awareness of the key issues

surrounding diversity and policing and recommendations for action that in the long term will assist the delivery of more culturally sensitive policing services in Canadian communities.

A community based research project, championed by Status of Women Canada, provided assistance to the Canadian Council of Muslim Women to increase awareness of the impacts on Muslim women's lives following the events of 9/11. As well as giving Muslim women the opportunity to voice their experiences and concerns, the project produced practical recommendations for enhancing interfaith understanding.

Our Canadian Studies Program also worked with the Association for Canadian Studies on a very effective conference held on the 2002 anniversary of September 11 to assess and study its impact on Canada, on Canadians, and on our relations with the United States. Our partnership with the CPRN was funded from within this financial envelope, as was a significant investment in the Metropolis Project to examine identity markers, the intersections of diversity and relevant policy issues.

In this country, a person can have multiple identities and multiple attachments and still feel proudly Canadian.

What role do Canadian Heritage programs like exchanges and the summer language bursary programs play in fostering connections across diverse communities?

We should not underestimate the value of face to face interactions and shared experiences in building bridges of understanding in this country. This is especially important for young Canadians whose positive experiences with the rich diversity of Canada's communities, languages and cultures can produce lasting impacts throughout their lifetime.

Youth exchanges and the Summer Language Bursary Program supported by Canadian Heritage create opportunities for tens of thousands of young Canadians annually to gain a better understanding of their country, its regions, linguistic duality, diverse cultures and each other. Bringing youth together to bridge some of the inherent divides in Canadian society is an important priority. We also encourage the participation of groups traditionally under-represented in exchange programs, such as Aboriginal youth, youth with disabilities, visible minority youth, youth from low-income households, and youth from rural or isolated areas.

The letters and feedback I receive from youth participants in these programs are overwhelmingly positive. For many young people, it is their first opportunity to experience life in another community outside their province or territory. Not only do they return from their experience with an enhanced appreciation for Canada's diversity and new friends from coast to coast, but the experience also has an enormous impact on their self-confidence, interest in public affairs, leadership skills and career choices.

Many have argued that knowledge of our official languages, history, cultural heritage, and civic/political processes is essential to an active and engaged citizenry. What role does the Department of Canadian Heritage play in promoting/encouraging the acquisition of this knowledge through learning materials, celebrations and commemorations? Should the Government of Canada play a stronger role in promoting civics education?

It is imperative that Canadians, and the next generation of Canadians in particular, be more engaged in the public life of their country. We cannot build a better Canada otherwise. The federal government has a duty to promote knowledge and information about our national achievements, in order to strengthen Canadians' sense of pride, attachment, and investment in the achievements to come. We can do this by working with the provinces in the area of curriculum, but also by the many other means available to us – imaginative ones harnessing the power of the Internet, for example.

Canadian Heritage leads the Government's efforts in this regard, with our huge array of programs in the areas of responsibility that you mention. Specifically, our Canadian Studies Program, as part of its mandate focusing on civic education, has pioneered dynamic and productive partnerships resulting in highly effective ways to help Canadians learn about our country. The popular *Heritage Minutes* have brought to many citizens valuable insights into the history and values of Canada – when *This Hour has 22 Minutes* parodies a product, then we know it is reaching a wide public! We've also recently issued a new resource guide, *Canadians and Their Government*; it's a comprehensive and user-friendly tool to help young people learn about how we govern ourselves.

Citizenship has been identified as a cross-cutting issue by many departments within the Government of Canada as well as to a range of other partners. How do you see Canadian Heritage's role in this wider milieu?

The Government of Canada recognizes that citizenship is more than a certificate or a place of origin. The 2002 Speech from the Throne highlighted the need for deliberate efforts to reinforce Canada's unique model of citizenship, based simultaneously on diversity and mutual responsibility. Canadian Heritage is playing a leadership role in delivering on these commitments to strengthen the partnership between citizens and government. These include initiatives to link Canadians to their history and heritage, putting into action the accord signed with the voluntary Sector last year, implementing an action plan on official languages and working with Aboriginal peoples to preserve and enhance Aboriginal languages and culture.

Canadian Heritage also co-chairs the Interdepartmental Committee on Citizenship Promotion with Citizenship and Immigration Canada to coordinate the roles and responsibilities of a number of government departments and agencies tasked with promoting citizenship values.