

**MILLENNIUM COUNCIL OF CANADA**  
**BACKGROUNDER**  
**April 6, 1997**

The Year 2000 is now just 1000 days away! Numerous Year 2000 projects and events are already underway in many countries in recognition of this first global celebration. It is anticipated that it will be the most significant cultural event in history.

Canadians across the country have recognized this great potential and are now in the forefront in the development of significant Millennium programs, projects and events which send a tangible message of hope, goodwill and unity to Canadians and the world.

The Year 2000 presents Canadians with an unprecedented opportunity for a nationwide commemoration and celebration of our shared heritage and tremendous cultural diversity. It also provides an extraordinary opportunity to strengthen our Canadian identity and to promote a more peaceful, equitable and sustainable future for all.

The Millennium Council of Canada (MCC) is a new Canadian not-for-profit "umbrella" organization created to represent and link existing Millennium and Year 2000 programs, projects and events in Canada to undertake a special mission.

The Millennium Council's mission is to promote a national commemoration and celebration of the Year 2000 and the new Millennium involving all Canadians through special Millennium programs, projects and events.

We are proposing the development of this national celebration in full partnership with the public and private sectors in a "Canadian Millennium Partnership".

The Council will perform various specific roles and functions to enable its important mission to be successfully accomplished over the next four years, including:

- Promoting and representing Canadian organizations planning Millennium programs, projects and events.
- Acting as a national Millennium information and communication centre by:
  - i) raising public awareness of Canadian Millennium programs, projects and events and the historical significance, meaning and opportunity of the Year 2000 and the new Millennium.
  - ii) facilitating information sharing and communications among, and linking and connecting; organizations, groups, government agencies and communities engaged in Millennium programs, projects and events.
- Encouraging, initiating and coordinating Millennium programs, projects and events in Canada.

- Facilitating and coordinating Canadian participation in global Year 2000 and Millennium preparations and celebrations.

### 1000-DAY COUNTDOWN TO THE YEAR 2000 BEGINS

April 6, 1997 marks the start of the 1000-day countdown to the Year 2000. This is a very appropriate moment to launch the concept of a national commemoration and celebration of the Year 2000 and the new Millennium and to launch the Millennium Council to the media and Canadian public.

Canadians are now uniting in celebration of the Millennium from coast-to-coast. We have one thousand days to realize the great opportunities and positive potential inherent in this upcoming historic moment.

Celebrating the Millennium has the power to unite Canada and the world toward a more peaceful, equitable and sustainable future for all. It is, after all, a "once-in-a-lifetime" opportunity for each of us and a "once-in-a-thousand-years" opportunity for the world!!

### CURRENT CANADIAN MILLENNIUM INITIATIVES

The MCC currently connects with over 25 major Millennium/Year 2000 projects and events, including two initiatives from the Province of Quebec. These projects account for substantially all existing community and municipally-based Millennium initiatives in Canada.

Existing Canadian Millennium projects include cultural projects, arts projects, educational projects, communication projects, technology projects, capital projects and celebration events. Many of the existing Millennium projects and events have a very strong youth focus. All of the projects and events have been developed with solid community involvement and support.

### MILLENNIUM COUNCIL OF CANADA - BACKGROUND AND EVOLUTION

The initial concept for a national commemoration and celebration of the Year 2000 and the new Millennium evolved out of the long-standing individual efforts of a number of great Canadians, especially Canadian futurist/educator Don Toppin together with Eric McLuhan and Peter Aykroyd. These efforts began as far back as 1964.

A number of initiatives were instituted which have now placed Canada in a global leadership role in regard to the Year 2000 and the new Millennium. These initiatives included the Muskoka Institute for the Future (1972), the World Future Society Assembly in Toronto in 1980 which attracted 6,000 participants, Toronto/2000

Foresight Seminars (1980), the Global Foundation For Understanding (1981), The Great

Millennium Campaign (originally announced in Toronto in 1986 by the Committee on Toronto/2000), the World Millennium Network (1986) and, in June 1995, the "Countdown 2000" Concert/Conference at the Ontario Institute For Studies In Education.

Internationally, solid links have already been formed with the United Kingdom Millennium Commission, Beacon Millennium Project (UK), United Nations University For Peace (Costa Rica), Earth Council Institute (Costa Rica), Conference Earth (Australia), Eco2000 (New Zealand), Millennium Institute (USA), Billennium (USA), World Peace 2000 Network and many other organizations and initiatives.

In January 1996, the concept of creating the Millennium Council of Canada was born. It came about as a result of a meeting in Montreal between David Woolfson, Executive Director of the Global Foundation For Understanding in Toronto and Pierre Patry, President of the "Bienvenue 2000" project in Montreal. These two organizations agreed to form the core of a Millennium Council for Canada which would represent Millennium projects and events on a national basis.

After that initial encouraging meeting, communication occurred with a number of existing Canadian Millennium project organizations - "i human 2000" in Edmonton, Calgary 2000 in Calgary, Ronde-et-Bleue in Quebec City, Toronto 2000: an Urban Odyssey, The Students Commission, Generation 2000, Music Canada 2000, the International School Peace Gardens Project, the Community Project Centre, the Canadian Foundation for World Development, the Creativity Consortium, Millennium Community Building Association, Ontario Council of Educators for a Global Perspective, Waterfront Regeneration Trust in Toronto, and The Millennium Foundation of Canada and the International Foundation of Learning in Vancouver.

After extensive consultations, representatives from these organizations participated in the two preliminary meetings of the Millennium Council of Canada which took place at Toronto City Hall on March 28 and then May 9, 1996 which were chaired by current MCC Chair Douglas Roche, O.C.

#### MILLENNIUM COUNCIL OF CANADA FOUNDING CONGRESS

The MCC Founding Congress took place at the CBC Broadcast Centre in Toronto on October 18th and was extremely successful. Over 60 representatives of Canadian Millennium/Year 2000 projects and events participated from numerous centres including Calgary, Edmonton, Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, and Vancouver.

In addition, the following Government representatives participated in the MCC

Founding Congress:

City of Toronto Mayor Barbara Hall

City of Toronto Councillor Martin Silva

City of Toronto Director of Protocol and Civic Events Hazel Farley

Metro Toronto Councillor David Miller

City of Winnipeg Representative Sherri Glugosh

Catherine Hurley, Department of Canadian Heritage (Ontario Region), Senior Advisor - Cultural Development and Heritage

Jaap Schouten, National Capital Commission, VP National Programming and Marketing

Michelle Comeau, National Capital Commission, Director of Capital Events and Programs

Paul Pellegrini, Office of the Minister for International Trade, Corporate Liaison -

Ministers Office

SUPPORT FOR THE MILLENNIUM COUNCIL

The initial major supporter of the Millennium Council of Canada has been the City of Toronto. The City of Toronto has recently provided the MCC with office space and assigned two support staff to its National Secretariat Office/Communication Centre. This represents a very substantial "in kind" contribution to the Council.

The international law firm of Fasken Campbell Godfrey generously agreed to prepare the federal Letters Patent application for the Millennium Council of Canada on a "pro bono" basis. Further, the international accountant firm of Arthur Andersen has also generously agreed to provide substantial "pro bono" services toward the creation of the MCC Project Plan and agreed to a much reduced fee structure in acting as MCC auditor.

Toronto based electronic media companies, Infinica and NetSteps, have combined to provide the Millennium Council with the initial design, development and hosting of its official "2000" website which will be launched on April 4th.

The cities of Calgary, Halifax and Winnipeg are also significant supporters of the Millennium Council mission and program. Representatives from Calgary 2000 and the City of Winnipeg participated in the Founding Congress.

Other Canadian cities and municipalities are now considering establishing "2000" Committees and initiatives. We anticipate continuing and widespread support from municipalities and communities across Canada.

In addition to the existing support of our Founding Member Organizations with their Millennium projects and events; numerous community groups, service clubs and religious organizations have expressed active support for the MCC and for the various Millennium projects in their communities.

The foundation for an outstanding National Millennium Program is now in place!