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## SPECIAL ELECTION ISSUE

# Canadian foreign policy after October 2015: The United Nations and Canada

The release in 2013 and 2014 of books (collections of short expert essays) on *"The United Nations and Canada: What Canada has done and should be doing at the United Nations,"* and the associated media coverage, left Canadians with a deeper understanding of the need for their government to be more actively involved on a range of global issues at the UN.

In an election year, this 2015 collection of short articles provides Canadians concerned about global governance and their country's place in the world with an agenda of important policy initiatives that a future Canadian government should consider.

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By Shannon Kindornay

Shannon Kindornay is a researcher at The North-South Institute. Her research interests include development cooperation, governance of the aid architecture, aid effectiveness, and aid and the private sector. Her current work includes exploring how the post-2015 sustainable development goals can be applied to Canada.

# Realizing the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals in Canada and abroad

In September at the United Nations, governments from around the world will agree to a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to replace the Millennium Development Goals – which expire at the end of 2015. The draft outcome document for September has been negotiated, and includes a broad, sustainable development agenda underpinned by a framework of goals, targets and indicators for 2030. Importantly, the SDGs will serve as a universal agenda, applying to all countries, not just developing ones.

Canada has been participating in consultations in the lead up to the September summit. Throughout

shared challenges – relies, at least in part, on high income countries taking the agenda seriously both at home and abroad. In Canada, civil society groups have called on the government to take seriously the universal nature of the agenda, including addressing Canada's sustainable development challenges such as climate change, poverty and inequalities in Canada. Indeed, Chief Perry Bellegarde of the Assembly of First Nations, Canada's largest Aboriginal group, has welcomed the SDGs, noting the need for greater efforts to close the well-being gap between indigenous peoples and non-indigenous peoples in Canada.

Going forward, there are a number of steps Canada can take to support the finalization of the SDG agenda and to realise its potential both at home and abroad. Canada is participating in the Inter-Agency Expert Group on



the negotiations, Canada championed an agenda based on realistic, focused and measurable targets and indicators, and consistently emphasized the poorest and most vulnerable as a key focus for the sustainable development agenda. Given its strong statistical system and expertise, Canada has also been engaging on the indicator framework for the SDGs, which is set to be finalized in March 2016.

Canada has recognized that the SDGs are universal in nature, meaning that they will apply to all Member States, including Canada. However, in June 2015 a confidential memo was leaked revealing that “Canada has no plans to apply the Post-2015 Agenda domestically, or to take on new reporting obligations beyond what [Canada is] currently producing,” notwithstanding the likelihood that the country will face pressures to do so. At the international level, Canada will be expected to take the SDG agenda seriously, particularly given that the legitimacy of the agenda – notably the claim that it represents a paradigm shift from the MDGs which were largely about the developing world, to a transformational, universal agenda based on the recognition of

Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG). As part of the IAEG, Canada has an opportunity to support the creation of a realistic, appropriate set of indicators that respect and measure the ambitious commitments embodied in the SDGs – including commitments which are more difficult to measure such as those related to issues like governance and rule of law. At the same time, Canada should advocate for an indicator set that takes advantage of existing national and international data collection processes and measurement frameworks to reduce the burden of



SDG reporting on developing countries. Once the indicator framework is established, Canada should continue to play a strong role on the accountability agenda by supporting developing countries to establish the necessary data infrastructure and capacity to monitor sustainable development outcomes. Canada is already taking positive steps

in the right direction, announcing the establishment of a Centre of Excellence for Civil Registration and



Vital Statistics at the International Development Research Centre in July 2015.

Sustained and energetic political and diplomatic engagement will also be critical for maintaining momentum on the

accountability agenda going forward. The High Level Political Forum at the United Nations will provide political oversight of SDG implementation – a challenging task considering the myriad governments, international organisations, and private sector and civil society partners that will be involved in implementing the goals. In addition to financial contributions to facilitate follow-up and review processes in partner countries and support for global and regional accountability mechanisms, Canada can lead by example by serving as one of the first high income countries to submit to the global voluntary review process. To be seen as a credible leader on the SDGs, sustained diplomacy and political support will also need to be matched by significant Government of Canada contributions to achieving the SDGs, through increased development assistance as well as leveraging partnerships with international agencies, civil society, the private sector and philanthropic organizations.

At the national level, the Canadian government should commit to the SDG agenda and its robust adoption and implementation. While some consultations have occurred, the federal

government will need to seriously ramp up efforts to make the SDG agenda a reality in Canada. The SDGs cover a range of issues that spread across federal, and provincial and territorial jurisdictions, such as health, education, energy, the environment and infrastructure. Cities and municipalities, civil society, academics and the private sector are also implicated in the SDG agenda. Strong federal leadership will be needed to raise awareness with appropriate stakeholders and among the public,

consult across levels of government and sectors, and establish a national strategy for SDG implementation informed by Canadian priorities. As research has shown, Canada is home to many innovative efforts to address sustainable development challenges. Canada's SDG roadmap should be developed through a consultative process that builds from existing efforts by different levels of government, civil society and the business sector.

Finally, an important aspect of the SDGs for Canada is the international call to leave no one behind. Research has continued to show that Canada's Aboriginal populations fall behind on almost every measure of economic, social and environmental well-being. The SDGs present an important opportunity for Canada to develop and adopt a national vision for sustainable development in Canada that targets the poorest and the most marginalized, and ensures that no one is left behind both abroad and at home.

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# Canada can lead in strengthening the rule of law and preventing atrocity crimes

By Fergus Watt

Fergus Watt is Executive Director of the World Federalist Movement – Canada.

In the early part of this century Canada was a global leader in the development of two historic initiatives to promote peace, international justice and the rule of law. The International Criminal Court (ICC) came into force in 2002. And the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), launched following a Canadian-led study in 2001, was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2005.



source: denhaag.nl

Both of these initiatives aim to strengthen prohibitions against the worst violations of international humanitarian law: genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Canadian leadership is once again needed to address criticisms and remedy problems in the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect and the ICC's Rome Statute.

Based in The Hague, the International Criminal Court now includes 123 state parties. There are currently nine situations under investigation, relating to crimes in: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Central African Republic (two separate situations, referred at different times), Darfur, Sudan, Kenya, Libya, Côte d'Ivoire, and Mali. Additionally, preliminary examinations are ongoing in Afghanistan, Colombia, Nigeria, Georgia, Guinea, Honduras, Iraq, Ukraine, and Palestine.

Four States Parties – Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and Mali – have referred situations occurring on their own territories. In addition, the United Nations Security Council has referred the situation in Darfur, Sudan, and the situation in Libya – both non-States Parties.

The Court has drawn criticism from members of the African Union for its perceived excessive focus on prosecuting political and military leaders in Africa.

And outside of Africa critics have pointed to the slow pace of trials as well as the high cost of investigations and court operations.

Canada was a true leader in the 1995 - 2002 period of negotiations and ratification of the ICC's Rome Statute. Canada led the 'like minded' coalition of middle power governments all the way through the negotiations in Rome. A Canadian government that resumes that position of energetic (but not uncritical) political support for this still new institution and enhanced international system of criminal justice is much needed today.

Canada, other states parties and court organs should:

- ▶ Make a commitment at the ICC Assembly of States Parties to work to reduce by 30 – 50 percent the time required to process individual cases.
- ▶ Adopt measures to ensure much greater levels of cooperation on arrests, protection of witnesses, relocation of witnesses, cooperation with investigations, detention, etc.
- ▶ Build on the complementarity provisions of the Rome Statute (i.e., the preference for national prosecutions, with the ICC only acting when states are unable or unwilling to take action domestically), in order to increase the number of prosecutions at the national level. Canada's Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act has been notoriously under-utilized since it was passed in 2000.
- ▶ Demonstrate a greater commitment to the Court by working diplomatically to improve the inconsistent cooperation between the ICC and international organizations, especially the United Nations Security Council.

Similarly, the Responsibility to Protect has reached a critical stage. Greater engagement by middle power states like Canada would generate considerable benefits for the international community's capacity to promote international peace and security and prevent mass atrocity crimes.

Ten years after R2P was formally adopted at the 2005 UN Reform Summit, the norm is now firmly established. However, although there exists a solid political consensus regarding the norm's conceptual outlines, what is needed now are constructive actions and proposals to operationalize and institutionalize R2P across the machinery of the United Nations and within governments.

International understanding of the Responsibility to Protect has solidified around the “three-pillar” description first outlined in the UN Secretary-General's 2009 report to the General Assembly. These include (1) the primary responsibility of the state to protect populations from genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and ethnic cleansing; (2) the parallel responsibility of the international community to assist the state in meeting its protection responsibilities, and (3) the international responsibility to respond in a timely and decisive manner, using whatever tools under Chapters VI, VII, and VIII of the UN Charter are available and appropriate, when the state is failing to meet its responsibilities to protect populations from the four crimes.

Recent criticism of R2P has centered primarily on its controversial application in Libya, and also on the failure of the international community to employ R2P in situations such as Syria, Central African Republic, Myanmar and South Sudan, among others.

There are practical steps that Canada could take, at home and internationally, to strengthen the Responsibility to Protect. These include:

- ▶ Appointing an R2P focal point. Within national governments, R2P focal points are senior officials with a mandate to operate across departments and mobilize protective strategies to prevent and halt mass atrocities crimes. At present 50 governments have identified such senior officials, forming a network of practitioners that helps overcome international indifference and inaction and demonstrates a national commitment to atrocities prevention.
- ▶ At the United Nations, operationalization of R2P objectives requires full integration within existing conflict prevention and resolution processes, accompanied by broader acceptance of the relevance of R2P across UN organs, offices, agencies, and mandates. Promoting a

more coherent systemic approach in a fragmented state-driven organization like the United Nations is difficult, but necessary.

Persistent advocacy by like-minded governments can make a difference.

- ▶ Promote a UN General Assembly resolution to formalize and regularize consideration of R2P by the assembly and lay a foundation for deeper institutionalization within the Secretariat, for example by generating regular requests for follow-up and reporting.
- ▶ Join the ACT (accountability, coherence, transparency) group of states. The Security Council veto is often a barrier to collective action to stop mass atrocities. While reform of the Council is politically difficult, the ACT group of states are mobilizing international support for restraint on use of the veto in instances when mass atrocities are being committed.
- ▶ Support calls for greater oversight by the Security Council in the implementation of resolutions that invoke R2P and include civilian protection mandates, especially when prevention fails and collective measures under Chapter VII are necessary to respond to mass atrocity crimes. An example is Brazil's proposals for “Responsibility While Protecting” an effort to remedy perceived excessive use of force and misinterpretation of Security Council mandates during the implementation of resolutions in Libya, and the lack of needed state rebuilding and reconstruction efforts following that intervention.

Both the International Criminal Court and the Responsibility to Protect are controversial initiatives, which have attracted considerable criticism in recent years. Nevertheless, the world community has evolved beyond the stage when governments, citizens and international organizations can simply stand idly by when others become the victims of genocide or other atrocity crimes. The ICC and R2P represent the emergence of a new, more mature system of international justice and the rule of law, built on the enforcement of universally accepted international humanitarian norms. Support for the effective application of these norms would form an important element of a more civilized and enlightened Canadian foreign policy.



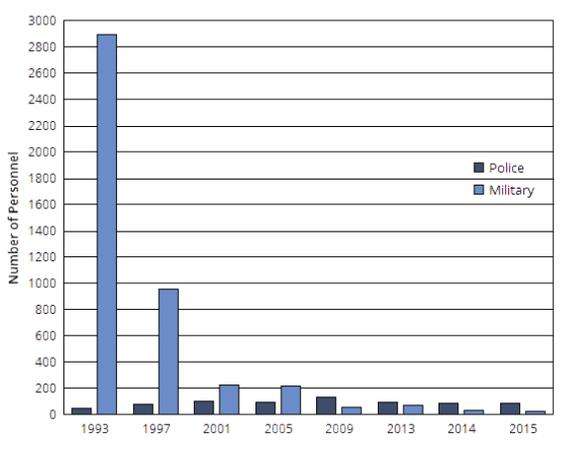
By Monique Cuillerier

Monique Cuillerier is  
WFM – Canada's  
Membership and  
Communications  
Director.

# Canada can and should do more to help United Nations Peacekeeping

Since 1948, there have been 71 United Nations peacekeeping operations. There are currently 16 such operations with over 125 000 uniformed and civilian personnel -- more than at any time in the organization's history.

Peacekeeping has evolved over the years, and will need to adapt further to meet the challenges arising from present and future demands.



In March, United States Ambassador to the UN Samantha Power announced that U.S. President Barack Obama would hold a world leaders summit on peacekeeping during the opening of the 70th session of the UN General Assembly in September “to help catalyze a wave of new commitments.”

And in June, the UN

Secretary-General received the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations chaired by Jorge Ramos-Horta. The panel's report is due to be considered by governments this fall. Among the panel's many recommendations are a number of ideas Canada has championed in the past – like a rapidly deployable military headquarters, a vanguard force and other measures for more rapid deployment of peacekeepers.

The leaders' summit hosted by President Obama is intended to build support for improved peacekeeping, particularly by addressing the three core needs that were identified in the high-level panel report: closing gaps in existing peacekeeping missions (for example, the need for specific transport and other equipment); new commitments of rapidly deployable personnel; and a broader set of forward-looking personnel commitments to staff future missions and fill gaps in current operations.

The 2015 WFM – Canada fact sheet on “Canada and UN Peacekeeping” documented significant personnel shortages, below levels mandated by the

UN Security Council, in five current missions (in Abyei (Sudan), Central African Republic, Darfur (Sudan), Mali and South Sudan). The current shortage of peacekeepers was prominent in discussions earlier this year when U.S. Ambassador Power went to Brussels to lobby European countries (and Canada) to increase their commitments of personnel as well as medical capacity, military intelligence, and the provision of helicopters and other vehicles.

Another important issue is the use of technology. In a recent report by the Expert Panel on Technology and Innovation in UN Peacekeeping it was noted that, “despite the omnipresence of advanced technology and applications in our daily lives, United Nations peacekeeping remains well behind the curve.”

While the UN struggles to overcome shortages of equipment and personnel, sexual violence by peacekeepers continues to generate a great deal of negative publicity. In particular, there have recently been a number of cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, many involving children, by peacekeepers in the Central African Republic. Although UN officials insist on a “zero tolerance” policy, they are limited in their capacity to enforce reforms. The UN cannot take legal action against peacekeepers, as that is left to the troop-contributing governments. Former Canadian Supreme Court justice Marie Deschamps has been named to head an independent investigation into the current allegations. As well, the NGO AIDS-Free World has launched a campaign, Code Blue, to address the issue of sexual abuse in the context of peacekeeping operations.

Will Canada return to its former role as a leader in UN peace operations? As reported in WFM – Canada's current update of Canada & UN Peacekeeping, while demand for peacekeepers has never been higher, Canada's contributions remain at an all time low -- 26 military personnel and 85 police as of June 2015. Canada now ranks 66th in personnel contributions to UN peacekeeping even though public opinion measurements continue to demonstrate strong support from Canadians for peacekeeping as a top priority activity of their military.

## Canadian personnel on UN peacekeeping missions

source: UN data

“If Canada returned to UN peacekeeping, it could have a real and lasting impact on peace and security in many of the world’s most dangerous regions,” says Walter Dorn, Professor of Defence Studies at Canadian Forces College. “Post-Afghanistan, there is so much Canadian skill, equipment and know-how that can be put to good use.”

Peter Langille, a peacekeeping expert and member of WFM – Canada’s Advisory Board coordinated the organization’s submission to the UN High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations. He has been a consistent campaigner for a UN Emergency Peace Service, a permanent standing UN capacity

that would allow for rapid deployment. “Even if the Europeans, Canada and others strengthen their political commitment to UN peace operations, that will still leave the problem the UN has getting troops into the field in a timely manner. The best solution is to create a UNEPS, a kind of ‘UN 911’. We wouldn’t want to live in a community without the means, such as police or a fire department, to respond quickly to emergencies. The time is long overdue to give the UN the capacity to respond rapidly when the Security Council calls for new peace operations.”



## United Nations peacebuilding in the twenty-first century

At the 2005 United Nations Reform Summit, member states launched an unprecedented set of institutions referred to as the Peacebuilding Architecture -- the Peacebuilding Commission, along with a special Fund and a support unit inside the UN Secretariat.

The 2004 “High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change” had recommended a new United Nations structure to support transitions from conflict to post-conflict, particularly in “marshalling and sustaining” international support “over whatever period may be necessary”. The Secretary General’s 2005 response, “In Larger Freedom”, therefore, proposed the creation of a Peacebuilding Commission along with a voluntary fund to finance urgent interventions.

Peacebuilding per se goes back several decades; however, its UN roots are in the Secretary General’s 1992 “Agenda for Peace.” But it was after 2000, with the international community’s focus on refining the tools of mediation, peacekeeping, development, human rights and humanitarian action and coordination, that the concept of peacebuilding evolved substantially. It became more and more evident, from academic and practical work on the link between conflict and development, that longer term efforts were required

to ensure the sustainability of peace in post conflict countries. Populations in war-affected countries need to see the benefits of peace, and governments need support in rebuilding institutions if countries are to avoid relapse into conflict. In addition, it became possible to identify trends in fragile states that could lead to conflict, thereby providing potential avenues for prevention of conflict.

The body of institutions referred to as the Peacebuilding Architecture comprise the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), a 31 member intergovernmental advisory body; a Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), a multi-year standing fund to launch immediate activities for post-conflict peacebuilding; and a small Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) to assist and support the Commission. The Fund and the Support Office would come under the supervision of the Secretary General. The PBC’s mandate is to support countries emerging from conflict by: extending the period of political attention; bringing together all relevant actors; marshalling resources; advising on and proposing integrated strategies for post conflict peacebuilding and recovery; and laying the foundation for

By Carolyn McAskie, O.C.,

Carolyn McAskie, O.C., has held numerous posts at the Canadian International Development Agency and in the UN system. She was United Nations Assistant Secretary General for Peacebuilding Support from 2006-2008.



source: UN website

sustainable development. The architecture was hailed as an innovative mechanism to close the gap in the UN's response to sustainable peace. In its first years the PBC has taken on strategic reviews of peacebuilding requirements in Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, the Central African Republic, Liberia and Guinea-Conakry, in all cases at the request of the countries themselves. In addition, 32 countries have received support from the Peacebuilding Fund.

After ten years of operation, the Peacebuilding Commission is still finding its feet. The first stage of a mandated 10-year evaluation has been completed with the recent publication of, "The Challenge of Sustaining Peace, Report of the Advisory Group of Experts for the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture." This report makes clear what many of us knew, i.e. that a member state body, with an inadequately funded support system and a small fund, would not be able to solve all the problems with which countries coming out of conflict are faced. Much has been accomplished with support given to peace processes and critical interventions, both political and through the Peacebuilding Fund. But the Report goes much further to say that Peacebuilding must be everyone's responsibility and advocates an ambitious system-wide UN approach to "sustaining peace."

The report argues that UN leadership must now inculcate a culture of peace into all of the UN's work and that management systems should be put in place to counteract the fragmentation of the United Nations varied institutions in this regard. Donors too must start to implement their endless agreements to work together with developing country partners, supporting local efforts and not competing with each other. Attention must be paid to better leadership on the ground, both for the international community, but also in supporting leadership in post-conflict countries and in countries at risk of falling into conflict.

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The need for a dynamic change of approach is made more urgent by a worrying tendency, which shows, after two decades of a global reduction in conflict, that the number and intensity of major conflicts are now increasing and, as the report points out, they are "more complex, increasingly fragmented and intractable." It is now obvious that there are two very different classes of conflict. There are the ongoing crises (and potential crises) in neglected and fragile states, many in Africa which are still, if not ignored, then not the subject of sufficient political and developmental attention. These include South Sudan, Central African Republic and Somalia, with Burundi and Guinea Bissau and

others at risk of relapse. But the ever more complicated emergencies in the Middle East, such as Iraq, Syria and now ISIS will always be beyond the remit of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The ambitious goals outlined in the Report of the Advisory Group of Experts must be seen in the context of the original goals set for the Peacebuilding Commission in 2005. The Report rightly challenges member states to see sustaining peace as the core task set for the UN by its Charter, with a high priority to be given to resources, capacities and organizational hierarchy. Further it calls for sustainable methods of funding, a strengthened field presence and headquarters capacity, mandated coordination among UN operational entities and better cooperation among key

member state bodies including the Security Council, the General Assembly and ECOSOC.

Member states will now review the recommendations and decide on action to be taken. It is important to note, however, that the original goals for the PBC, seen as ambitious in 2005, are considerably more modest than those outlined by the Advisory Group of Experts, but nevertheless have not been met. This does not augur well for the review. The PBC has been largely ignored by the Security Council, and the Peacebuilding Support Office has never been in a position to mandate

actions by other parts of the UN system. But the most egregious failure of the Commission is that, over and above the work of the Peacebuilding Fund, there has been little in the way of serious funding for sustainable peacebuilding in the countries on the PBC's agenda. Canada spent five years as the Chair of the Commission's sub-committee on Sierra Leone without making a single financial contribution to that country. Nor have there been efforts from many other donors for re-building health and education, justice and good governance and other critical sectors. Is it possible that the effects of the Ebola crisis would have been mitigated if UN member states, both donors and responsible governments, had invested the kind of massive resources envisaged in the health sectors of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in the years in which these countries have been on the Commission's agenda? Would Burundi be suffering its current political crisis if similar investments had been made in the justice sector, and in education and employment over the last ten years? These countries have just not

had the massive increase in donor attention promised by the mandate of the PBC and therefore remain far behind in their own peacebuilding goals.

The recommendations of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Peacebuilding Architecture present a major challenge to member states, including Canada. To implement these recommendations will not only require substantial funding, but will require a substantial review of how the organs of the United Nations carry out their business in pursuit of peace. It remains to be seen the extent to which member states will share the admirable and ambitious goals of the Advisory Group and whether they, along with the senior management of the UN, will be prepared to revamp and finance the workings of the system, well beyond the confines of the Peacebuilding Architecture, to work towards global sustainable peace.

This will present a major challenge for the Canadian government in the post-election period.



## How the Canadian government can improve its record on women's rights

This year marks the 15th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, the auspicious formal beginnings of the UN's fight against sexual violence in conflict.

The resolution reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction. It stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. Resolution 1325 and a number of subsequent related resolutions call on all parties to conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, in situations of armed conflict.

In the 15 years since UNSC Resolution 1325 was adopted, Canada has implemented a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS),

and otherwise engaged in the WPS agenda. And there have been other highlights, such as Canada's Development and Peace Project in Afghanistan. However, there is still much that the next government can do to improve this country's record on women's rights.

Although Canada has long had a position amongst the world's nations that earned respect for its human rights record and history of peace building, this reputation has been eroded. The UN Human Rights Committee and other UN human rights reporting bodies have on multiple occasions called for changes to the way Canada approaches the human rights of its citizens, in particular with respect to aboriginal peoples and women. On 23 July 2015, the Committee released its first report card on Canada in approximately 10 years and, unfortunately, it highlighted a number of examples where this country is failing to meet its human rights obligations.

**By Marilou McPhedran  
and Megan Nobert**

**Marilou McPhedran is a human rights lawyer who served as the Principal (dean) of the University of Winnipeg's Global College in its founding years from 2008-2012 and currently teaches human rights at the Global College.**

**Megan Nobert is a Canadian born international criminal and human rights lawyer. She is currently working as an independent consultant and activist while she completes her Doctorate of Law on gendercide at Tilburg University.**

Of particular importance is the reference to the fact that Canada has yet to implement a number of the UN Human Rights Committee's previous recommendations, a signifier of the Canadian government's lack of commitment to human rights. This is troubling for a country that has the means to provide full human rights protection to its citizens, but seems to lack the will to do so.

Specific recommendations also target the current government's lack of response to the issue of murdered and missing aboriginal women in Canada. With an overwhelming number of other reports and recommendations on this issue, it's not surprising that the UN Human Rights Committee is



again calling out the Canadian government for ignoring this glaring problem. What should be surprising is our continued blasé response to such disturbing statistics – approximately 1,017 missing and murdered

aboriginal women between 1980 and 2012. It is important to bear in mind that this number is likely quite a bit higher, and does not take into account the number of aboriginal women subjected to sexual violence throughout the country.

Now, one might say that perhaps Canada is doing a better job of protecting the human rights of those in other countries, upholding its tradition of peacebuilding and humanitarian aid. However, although considerable sums of money have been spent on victims of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), a commendable and appropriate way to fulfill the country's commitments under UNSC Resolution 1325 and the other associated WPS resolutions, some of the specifics of this humanitarian funding fall short of what we should expect from Canada. Although money is provided to ensure that victims of sexual violence in the DRC have access to health care, the provisions by which this funding is provided are quite specific in that it cannot be used to fund abortions for rape victims. This requires

women who have already been traumatised, who are already stigmatised by their communities, to carry the child their rapist left within them. It is a cruel and unnecessary provision that undermines Canada's programming on sexual violence in the DRC.

Similar stipulations against funding the full range of health services have tarnished Canada's current international development priority on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health.

These are just a few examples of the problems facing Canada and its obligations to fulfill human rights, at home and abroad. The two are connected: the example we set in Canada strengthens our international standing and credibility to promote human rights internationally.

In this anniversary year of UNSC 1325 a global review is underway at the UN, to draw lessons from the past and develop improved programs for member states and the UN system in the years ahead. The next Canadian government should support this process.

At present, Canada's WPS National Action Plan reporting process – plagued by delays, lack of clarity and incomplete reporting in the past – is in danger of not being funded at all beyond 2016.

A future Canadian government should commit to long term funding for the WPS national reporting process under START (the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force). This would provide an example and catalyst for a wider commitment to the Women, Peace and Security agenda internationally. A future Canadian government should also consider Canada's poor record on women's rights at home in the past few years, and take a long look at the recommendations on how to combat the problem of the murdered and missing aboriginal women in this country. It should consider whether we are spending our humanitarian aid appropriately, in a way that treats victims of conflict with dignity.

In essence, a future Canadian government should consider making some changes so that Canada can once again say that it is fulfilling its international obligations towards women, at home and abroad.



# Hitting the re-set button: Canada's role in arms control and disarmament

If, or when, a new political day dawns on Canada, there will not be a moment to lose to regain our country's involvement in the long struggle to free the world of the specter of nuclear weapons.

What, exactly, should a new Canadian government do? The first move should be to give a new priority to the subject. The continued existence of 15,850 nuclear weapons, 1,800 of them kept in a state of high operational alert, a broken Non-Proliferation Treaty, the storm clouds over a diplomatic deal to keep Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon are all front and centre on the world political stage. So too is a new humanitarian movement, built on huge conferences of governments and civil society in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna, which shows the "catastrophic humanitarian consequences" of any use of nuclear weapons. It has led, so far, to 107 states signing the Humanitarian Pledge "to identify and pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons." All of this forms the run-up to a 2018 UN International Conference on Nuclear Disarmament.

A changed Canadian government attitude would give a priority to Canadian involvement with like-minded states now searching for the best legal route to a nuclear weapons-free world. Instead of shunning such work, as in the recent past, the government would embrace it and begin by implementing the 2010 unanimous motion in Parliament, which supported the UN Secretary-General's call for a Nuclear Weapons Convention and urged the government to take a major worldwide diplomatic initiative for nuclear disarmament.

A positive attitude to this work by a new government would re-energize parliamentary and civil society work in the development of public opinion to support Canada's efforts. Just changing the angle of the government's vision from negative obstruction to positive involvement would set a new course for Canadian action.

The changed angle of vision could be signaled by open support for the Iran nuclear deal as by far the

best resolution of a verifiable way to keep Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon; signing the Humanitarian Pledge to show that Canada takes seriously the need to move away from reliance on nuclear deterrence for global security; opening up a working relationship with the New Agenda Coalition, a group of middle power states seeking a way to start negotiations for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

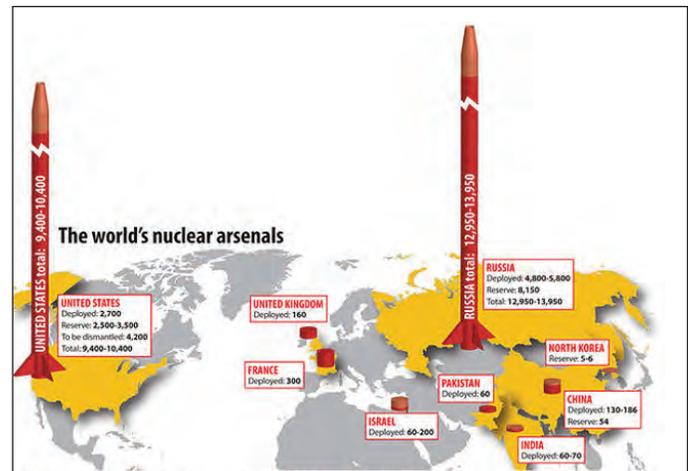
These measures are, in government parlance, easily "doable," when the government has the political will to take them.

This more holistic approach to nuclear disarmament would be a great improvement over the present slavish adherence to the discredited "step-by-step" approach, which has led, not to nuclear disarmament, but to the modernization programs of all the nuclear weapons states, which if unchecked, will carry their nuclear arsenals through the rest of the 21st century.

The draft Final Document of the 2015 NPT Review Conference pointed to a new strategy. It contained a passage calling for a new working group to identify "legal provisions" to contribute to a nuclear weapons-free world. The Final Document required consensus to pass and, unfortunately, a dispute over a proposed conference to plan a nuclear weapons free zone in the Middle East derailed the whole NPT meeting. But the idea of an open-ended working group to plan legal work forward may yet survive at the UN General Assembly this fall. This would provide Canada an instant opportunity to roll up its sleeves and get to work.

By Douglas Roche

The Hon. Douglas Roche, O.C., is an author, parliamentarian and diplomat, who has specialized in peace and human security issues. Mr. Roche was a Senator, Member of Parliament, Canadian Ambassador for Disarmament, and Visiting Professor at the University of Alberta.



source: International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND)

Considering all the opportunities open to a revitalized Canada, the Canadian Pugwash Group's conference in July at the Thinkers' Lodge, Pugwash, N.S., recommended that Canada host an inclusive international meeting to explore effective legal measures for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. Such a meeting could elaborate elements of a working agenda for a multilateral process to achieve the goal of a nuclear weapons-free world. This is the kind of action Canada took in 1997 in convening interested states to start writing the successful Anti-Personnel Landmines Treaty.

The resistance of the nuclear weapons states (the P5) to the non-nuclear weapons states getting into active work for nuclear disarmament is, of course, well known. It takes courage to go up against the big boys, but the NPT has been explicit in affirming that all states have a responsibility to enter into this work. This means also challenging the NATO establishment, which still considers nuclear weapons the "supreme guarantee" of security despite the NPT's "irrevocable undertaking" for elimination.

Canada, which once did inspiring, effective work on developing verification measures for arms control, can recover its leadership role and once again become a valued member of the international community whose leading members are working daily to find viable ways to peace in the 21st century. The rejoining of this effort with a changed attitude would be an accomplishment in itself.

A new government should move immediately to repair the damage done to Canada by its refusal, until now, to sign the Arms Trade Treaty, which has set new international standards for regulating the \$70 billion business that fuels conflict, undermines peace and security, threatens economic and social development, and causes widespread human suffering. With 130 states parties to the treaty (71 ratifications), the absence of Canada, for the spurious reason that it would restrict domestic gun ownership, is a lamentable shirking of our international duty. This obduracy to the common good needs to be quickly swept away by a new government recognizing Canada's responsibilities to the world.

Similarly, quick action should be taken by a new government in closing the loophole Canada gave itself permitting Canadian soldiers in combined operations with allies to use cluster munitions. Such a provision, as 27 international lawyers and former ambassadors for disarmament have pointed out, undermines the legislation, which is aimed at ending cluster munitions. The fact that all Opposition parties in the House of Commons voted against this marred legislation indicates that a new government has plenty of scope to revise it.

A new day is ahead for Canada's role in arms control and disarmament. What counts is the political will to make changes.



By John E. Trent

John Trent is a former professor of political science at the University of Ottawa and current Chairperson of the WFM – Canada Board of Directors. He is a former Secretary General of the International Political Science Association and has written several books on the United Nations.

## Let Canada take the lead at the UN – as it used to do

Canada must once again take the lead on the United Nations and global institutions in general – as it used to do. In the past Canada was a leader, not a follower or an absentee.

**The Need:** The world has a desperate need for global institutions capable of making decisions about the multitude of global problems. Ask anyone and they will tell you the world is challenged by one or several of the following problems: conflicts, climate change, the inequality gap, terrorism, pollution, the plight of women and children, fundamentalism of many kinds, mass migrations, pandemics, financial crises and enfeebled states etc. But, many do not seem to recognize that each one of these global

challenges has one common denominator: the world is incapable of taking decisions that will command respect in order to resolve the problems. Syria: no decisions. Ukraine: no decisions. South Pacific: no decisions. Israel and Palestine: no decisions. Nuclear weapons, no decisions. But arms sales flourish and thousands die.

Why can't the UN make the big, urgent decisions? In one word, because of sovereignty – the belief that each state can do as it wants with impunity. Worst of all, the major powers which should be leading the world are hobbling the Security Council by threatening to use their vetoes to stop any possible action. The five Permanent Members use their sovereignty to

preserve their own power and spheres of interest rather than promoting cooperation.

**What would effective global institutions look like?** This is the question experts are trying to answer. But it is putting the cart before the horse. Some two centuries ago, when the United States and then Canada wanted to form continent-wide federations they first of all had to set the political table. They had to convince each other that a change in their political institutions was necessary before they could decide on the nature of the institutions. They had to decide how to get from A to B. That is our most important challenge today. There are lots of learned tomes on what international organizations should look like but few about how we can get them.

But this we can say: neither states nor citizens will allow global governance to be authoritarian. Any new institutions will include the techniques of democratic state-craft developed over the past two hundred years including: dividing and controlling power, promoting rights and equality, constitutional safeguards, democratic institutions, elections, federalism, liberalism, rule of law, local police and militias and decentralization.

**How can Canada move the world ahead?** A forward looking government of Canada will make 'Rethinking the United Nations' a central program of the Department of Foreign Affairs and give it the resources required to promote this quasi-constitutional process and to encourage other 'like-minded' countries to become partners. Civil society organizations and academics can plan, push and prod, and will be important partners in the process, but only governments have the resources to initiate the global diplomatic processes.

If such a unit existed today, it would be expected to help steer Canadian policy and engagement with a growing number of studies and initiatives for global governance reforms. These include:

- ▶ The High-level International Panel on UN Peace Operations and the Peacekeeping Summit being convened in September by President Obama;
- ▶ The Advisory Group of Experts reviewing the UN's peacebuilding architecture;
- ▶ International reform efforts such as the Commission on Global Security, Justice and Governance, and the Independent

Commission on Multilateralism of the International Peace Institute;

- ▶ Building support for the goal of having UN development, humanitarian and peacebuilding activities in countries to be administered through one budget and lead agency;
- ▶ Implementing recommendations from the Secretary General's report on his 'Ten Year Reflection' on the 'Responsibility to Protect' normative framework;
- ▶ Restructuring of the UN Human Rights machinery being led by the High Commissioner for Human Rights.
- ▶ Effort for a UN Parliamentary Assembly, supported by more than 65 Canadian parliamentarians, from all parties;
- ▶ Proposals for the creation of a United Nations Emergency Peace Service;
- ▶ Practical steps to make selection of the UN Secretary-General, and other high level UN posts, more transparent and merit-based.

On June 16, 2015, the Report of the Commission on Global Security, Justice & Governance was launched at the Peace Palace in The Hague. In presenting their report, Co-Chair, former Nigerian Foreign Minister and UN Under-Secretary-General of Political Affairs, Ibrahim Gambari noted that "the UN and global governance institutions are ill-suited to address many modern, evolving threats and must reform or risk prolonging and deepening global crises." According to co-chair former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, the world requires "more capable tools of global governance, with different kinds of public, private, and mixed institutions designed for twenty-first-century challenges."

Their report includes many recommendations for improving the UN system in the short term. But they also acknowledge the need for a longer term approach to global governance reforms. They call for "a transitional strategy that includes building coalitions to initiate and nurture reforms . . . to martial, monitor and sustain support for the reform agenda."

Canada must embrace the need for reform, dedicate resources within the federal government and help lead the way.



By Warren Allmand

The Hon. Warren Allmand P.C., O.C., Q.C., is the current National President of the World Federalist Movement – Canada. He was President of Rights and Democracy (the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development). This followed a 33-year career as a Member of Parliament during which he held several cabinet posts.

# The United Nations and human rights

In 1945 the United Nations recognized that you could not have world peace without respect for universal human rights. As a result the UN Charter included several significant provisions to this end and called for the establishment of a Commission on Human Rights, which was set up in 1946 with its first task the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Driven by the contributions of Eleanor Roosevelt, René Cassin and Canadian John Humphrey, the Commission completed the Universal Declaration in 1948, and it was adopted by the General Assembly by a vote of 48 to nothing, with eight abstentions. This was an outstanding achievement, an important landmark in human history. This was followed by international instruments dealing with genocide, war crimes, refugees, racial discrimination, torture and the rights of women and children.

instruments – through the imprisonment of individuals without due process under security certificates; through the indiscriminate naming of innocent citizens to “no-fly lists;” and through the recent passage of Bill C-51 (The Anti-Terrorist Act). On July 23, 2015 the UN Human Rights Committee chastised Canada for several provisions in C-51 that were in violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, including its failure to provide appropriate oversight to prevent and correct abuses. The same UN report also censured Canada for its treatment of aboriginal children and women. In addition there are several instances where Canada has fallen behind in its obligations to UN treaty-based reporting requirements, and its failure to support requests for more funding for the UN Human Rights System.

Canada is not alone in such matters. In fact there is no state without fault. But Canada should show the way in correcting such failings.

Taking international human rights obligations seriously domestically not only strengthens human rights protection in Canada. It also has major foreign policy implications. If we are conscientiously implementing our obligations at home, as well as acting on the recommendations from UN human rights treaty bodies, then we will be in a much stronger and more credible position to advocate that others also fulfill their obligations.

Signing on to key UN treaties allows us to press other countries to follow suit. Engaging in UN reviews in good faith means we can demand the same of other governments. And showing we are serious about implementation is essential, as that is where the international human rights system falls short, worldwide.

Our goal must be to strengthen the implementation procedures and the oversight mechanisms for all human rights standards. Canada in the past has shown great leadership in supporting UN peacekeeping, development and human rights. This is a proud tradition, which should be enhanced and continued.



**Eleanor Roosevelt with Declaration of Human Rights**  
source: UN photo

All of this is to say that the UN has been extremely successful in adopting human rights standards applicable to the whole world, to all continents and all cultures. There has been however a serious problem with implementation. It was expected that the highest level of

implementation would be accomplished by the passage of implementing legislation by the ratifying states, with human rights charters and human rights commissions in all states. Although many countries have done this, there are still too many wars, too many conflicts and too many human rights violations.

Canada has ratified nearly all the major human rights conventions, has legislated these human rights standards, set up human rights commissions, and adopted a Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Nevertheless, in recent years Canada has failed to respect its obligations under several of these





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Mondial's editorial working group: Leonard Angel, Robin Collins, Monique Cuillerier, Karen Hamilton, Simon Rosenblum, Fergus Watt

World Federalist Movement – Canada  
323 Chapel Street, Unit 110  
Ottawa, ON K1N 7Z2

[www.worldfederalistscanada.org](http://www.worldfederalistscanada.org)