

BUILDING A  
RESILIENT ECONOMY:  
A CLEANER &  
HEALTHIER FUTURE  
FOR OUR KIDS



SPEECH  
FROM  
THE  
THRONE

to Open the  
First Session of  
the 44<sup>th</sup> Parliament  
of Canada

November 23, 2021



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A Cleaner & Healthier Future for Our Kids

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# Honourable Senators, Members of the House of Commons,

Congratulations to each of you and welcome to all the new Parliamentarians who will together with their colleagues make their mark on Canada.

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I would like to acknowledge that we are gathered on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

This land acknowledgement is not a symbolic declaration. It is our true history. In each of your own ridings, I encourage you to seek out the truth, and to learn about the lived realities in First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities. Although each community is distinct, we all share a desire to chart a way forward together towards reconciliation.

The discovery of unmarked graves of children who died in the residential school system shows how the actions of governments and institutions of the past have devastated Indigenous Peoples and continue to impact them today. We cannot hide from these discoveries; they open deep wounds.

Despite the profound pain, there is hope.

There is hope in the every day. Reconciliation is not a single act, nor does it have an end date. It is a lifelong journey of healing, respect and understanding. We need to embrace the diversity of Canada and demonstrate respect and understanding for all peoples every day.

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Already, I have seen how Canadians are committed to reconciliation. Indigenous Peoples are reclaiming our history, stories, culture and language through action. Non-Indigenous Peoples are coming to understand and accept the true impact of the past and the pain suffered by generations of Indigenous Peoples. Together they are walking the path towards reconciliation.

We must turn the guilt we carry into action.

Action on reconciliation.

Action on our collective health and well-being.

Action on climate change.

Our Earth is in danger. From a warming Arctic to the increasing devastation of natural disasters, our land and our people need help. We must move talk into action and adapt where we must. We cannot afford to wait.

From the grief and pain of residential schools to the fear of threats to our natural environment to the profound impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, this past year has been hard on all of us.

I want to thank all workers across Canada, especially those in health care, for their efforts to keep us safe and healthy, and offer my deepest condolences to those who have experienced loss of loved ones during the pandemic. It has touched us all, including those in this chamber who lost a cherished colleague just a few days ago, Senator Forest-Niesing. To her family and to all of you, my deepest sympathies.

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The pandemic has shown us that we need to put a focus on mental health in the same way as physical well-being because they are inseparable.

As you begin this 44<sup>th</sup> Parliament of Canada, and as we recover from the effects of the pandemic and build a better relationship between Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous Peoples, I urge you to transform discussion into concrete results for us and for our country.

Collaborate with and listen to each other.

Listen to the diverse voices who speak a multitude of languages and who shape this country.

Confronting the hard questions will not always be easy or comfortable—and it will require conviction—but it is necessary. The outcome will be a sustainable, united Canada, for you, for me, for our children, and for every generation to come.



SPEECH FROM  
THE THRONE

# OPENING

As we speak, British Columbians are facing immeasurable challenges as their homes, their communities, and their well-being are impacted by terrible flooding.

But in a time of crisis, we know how Canadians respond. We step up and we are there for each other.

And the Government will continue to be there for the people of British Columbia.

In 2020, Canadians did not know they would face the crisis of a once-in-a-century pandemic. But, as always, no one should be surprised by how Canadians responded.

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We adapted. We helped one another. And we stayed true to our values.

Values like compassion, courage, and determination.

Values like democracy.

And in this difficult time, Canadians made a democratic choice.

Their direction is clear: not only do they want Parliamentarians to work together to put this pandemic behind us, they also want bold, concrete solutions to meet the other challenges we face.

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Growing an economy that works for everyone.

### Opening

Fighting climate change.

Moving forward on the path of reconciliation.

Making sure our communities are safe, healthy, and inclusive.

Yes, the decade got off to an incredibly difficult start, but this is the time to rebuild.

This is the moment for Parliamentarians to work together to get big things done, and shape a better future for our kids.





SPEECH FROM  
THE THRONE

# THIS IS THE MOMENT TO BUILD A HEALTHIER TODAY AND TOMORROW

Priority number one remains getting the pandemic under control. The best way to do that is vaccination.

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Already, the Government has mandated vaccination for federal and federally-regulated workers, and for everyone travelling within Canada by plane, train, or ship. It has also ensured a standardized Canadian proof of vaccination for domestic and international use.

The Government is securing next generation COVID-19 vaccines, boosters, and doses for kids from 5 to 11.

And around the world, Canada will continue working with its partners to ensure fair and equitable access to vaccines and other resources.

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To build a healthy future, we must also strengthen our healthcare system and public health supports for all Canadians, especially seniors, veterans, persons with disabilities, vulnerable members of our communities, and those who have faced discrimination by the very system that is meant to heal.

There is work to be done. On accessibility. On care in rural communities. On delayed procedures. On mental health and addiction treatment. On long-term care. On improving data collection across health systems to inform future decisions and get the best possible results.

The Government will work collaboratively with provinces, territories, and other partners to deliver real results on what Canadians need.

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This is the moment  
to build a healthier  
today and tomorrow



SPEECH FROM  
THE THRONE

# THIS IS THE MOMENT TO GROW A MORE RESILIENT ECONOMY

The best thing we can do for the economy remains ending the pandemic for good. But as we do, we should rebuild an economy that works for everyone. At the height of the lockdowns, the Government made historic, necessary investments so families could keep paying the rent and small businesses could stay afloat.

Now, with one of the most successful vaccination campaigns in the world, and employment back to pre-pandemic levels, the Government is moving to more targeted support, while prudently managing spending.

To ensure no one is left behind, support will be extended or added for industries that continue to struggle.

*11*

At the same time, the Government will also continue making life more affordable for all Canadians.

Inflation is a challenge that countries around the world are facing. And while Canada's economic performance is better than many of our partners, we must keep tackling the rising cost of living. To do that, the Government's plan includes two major priorities: housing and child care.

Whether it is building more units per year, increasing affordable housing, or ending chronic homelessness, the Government is committed to working with its partners to get real results.

For example, the Housing Accelerator Fund will help municipalities build more and better, faster.

The Government will also help families buy their first home sooner with a more flexible First-Time Home Buyer's Incentive, a new Rent-to-Own program, and by reducing the closing costs for first-time buyers.

Supporting families will make life more affordable for the middle class and people working hard to join it.

The Canada Child Benefit has already helped lift hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty and will continue increasing to keep up with the cost of living.

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This is the moment  
to grow a more  
resilient economy

The Government will also continue building the first-ever Canada-wide early learning and child care system. By the end of 2022, average fees for regulated child care will be cut in half in most of the provinces and territories. And in some places, this will even happen as early as the start of the year. Families will save thousands of dollars.

Four jurisdictions have not yet reached agreements on child care. Two are territories with unique infrastructure challenges, and the Government will keep working together to ensure we meet the needs of the North. The Government will continue working with the remaining two provinces to finalize agreements that will deliver \$10-a-day child care for families who so badly need it.

Investing in affordable child care – just like housing – is not just good for families. It helps grow the entire economy. And so does immigration.

That is why the Government will continue increasing immigration levels and reducing wait times, while supporting family reunification and delivering a world-leading refugee resettlement program.

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This is the moment  
to grow a more  
resilient economy



SPEECH FROM  
THE THRONE

# THIS IS THE MOMENT FOR BOLDER CLIMATE ACTION

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Building a resilient economy means investing in people. But the work does not stop there.

After all, growing the economy and protecting the environment go hand in hand.

By focusing on innovation and good, green jobs, and by working with like-minded countries – we will build a more resilient, sustainable, and competitive economy.

As a country, we want to be leaders in producing the world's cleanest steel, aluminum, building products, cars, and planes. Not only do we have the raw materials and energy to do that, most importantly, we have skilled, hard-working Canadians to power these industries.

As we move forward on the economy of the future, no worker or region will be left behind. The Government will bring together provinces, territories, municipalities, and Indigenous communities, as well as labour and the private sector, to tap into global capital and attract investors.

Canada will emerge from this generational challenge stronger and more prosperous.

The Government is taking real action to fight climate change. Now, we must go further, faster.

That means moving to cap and cut oil and gas sector emissions, while accelerating our path to a 100 percent net-zero electricity future.

Investing in public transit and mandating the sale of zero emissions vehicles will help us breathe cleaner air.

Increasing the price on pollution while putting more money back in Canadians' pockets will deliver a cleaner environment and a stronger economy.

Protecting our land and oceans will address biodiversity loss. In this work, the Government will continue to strengthen its partnership with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, to protect nature and respect their traditional knowledge.

Creating the Canada Water Agency will safeguard that vital resource and support our farmers.

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And to address the realities communities across the country already face, the Government will also strengthen action to prevent and prepare for floods, wildfires, droughts, coastline erosion, and other extreme weather worsened by climate change. The Government will be there to build back in communities devastated by these events. This will include the development of Canada's first-ever National Adaptation Strategy.

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This is the moment  
for bolder  
climate action





SPEECH FROM  
THE THRONE

# THIS IS THE MOMENT TO FIGHT HARDER FOR SAFER COMMUNITIES

While we address climate change –

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While we fight COVID-19 and its consequences –

While we grow our economy for everyone –

We cannot turn away from other challenges.

Gun violence is on the rise in many of our biggest cities.

While investing in prevention and supporting the work of law enforcement, we must also continue to strengthen gun control.

The Government has taken important actions like introducing lifetime background checks.

The Government will now put forward measures like a mandatory buyback of banned assault-style weapons, and move forward with any province or territory that wants to ban handguns.

During the pandemic, we have also seen an unacceptable rise in violence against women and girls.

The Government is committed to moving forward with a 10-year National Action Plan on gender-based violence, and will continue to support organizations providing critical services.

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This is the moment  
to fight harder for  
safer communities

When someone in our country is targeted because of their gender, or who they love, or where they come from, the way they pray, the language they speak, or the colour of their skin, we are all diminished.

Everyone should be – and feel – safe.

The Government will continue combatting hate and racism, including with a renewed Anti-Racism Strategy.



SPEECH FROM  
THE THRONE

# THIS IS THE MOMENT TO STAND UP FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Canadians understand that equity, justice, and diversity are the means and the ends to living together.

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Fighting systemic racism, sexism, discrimination, misconduct, and abuse, including in our core institutions, will remain a key priority.

The Government will also continue to reform the criminal justice system and policing.

This is the moment to rebuild for everyone. The Government will continue to invest in the empowerment of Black and racialized Canadians, and Indigenous Peoples. It will also continue to fight harmful content online, and stand up

for LGBTQ2 communities while completing the ban on conversion therapy.

As Canadians, our two official languages are part of who we are.

It is essential to support official language minority communities, and to protect and promote French outside and inside Quebec.

The Government will reintroduce the proposed Act for the Substantive Equality of French and English and the Strengthening of the *Official Languages Act*.

To support Canadian culture and creative industries, the Government will also reintroduce legislation to reform the *Broadcasting Act* and ensure web giants pay their fair share for the creation and promotion of Canadian content.

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This is  
the moment  
to stand up  
for diversity  
and inclusion



SPEECH FROM  
THE THRONE

# THIS IS THE MOMENT TO MOVE FASTER ON THE PATH OF RECONCILIATION

This year, Canadians were horrified by the discovery of unmarked graves at former residential schools.

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We know that reconciliation cannot come without truth. As the Government continues to respond to the Calls to Action, it will invest in that truth, including with the creation of a national monument to honour survivors, and with the appointment of a Special Interlocutor to further advance justice on residential schools.

To support communities, the Government will also invest significantly in a distinctions-based mental health and wellness strategy, guided by Indigenous Peoples, survivors, and their families.

Everyone in our country deserves to be safe.

That is why the Government will accelerate work with Indigenous partners to address the national tragedy of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People.

The Government will also make sure communities have the support they need to keep families together, while ensuring fair and equitable compensation for those harmed by the First Nations Child and Family Services program.

Reconciliation requires a whole-of-government approach, breaking down barriers, and rethinking how to accelerate our work. Whether it is eliminating all remaining long-term drinking water advisories or implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Government is committed to closing the gaps that far too many First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities still face today.

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This is the moment  
to move faster  
on the path  
of reconciliation



SPEECH FROM  
THE THRONE

# THIS IS THE MOMENT TO FIGHT FOR A SECURE, JUST, AND EQUITABLE WORLD

The last 19 months have underscored that we live in a deeply interconnected world.

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Canada must stand up on the pressing challenges of our time, through our own commitments and by increasing our engagement with international partners, coalitions, and organizations.

In the face of rising authoritarianism and great power competition, Canada must reinforce international peace and security, the rule of law, democracy, and respect for human rights.

Canada's prosperity – and middle class jobs – depend on preserving and expanding open, rules-based trade and

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ensuring our supply chains are strong and resilient.

At home, the Government will continue to protect Canadians from threats to our communities, our society, and our democracy.

A changing world requires adapting and expanding diplomatic engagement. Canada will continue working with key allies and partners, while making deliberate efforts to deepen partnerships in the Indo-Pacific and across the Arctic.

Increasing Canada's foreign assistance budget each year, and investing in sustainable, equitable, and feminist development that benefits the world's most vulnerable and promotes gender equality will continue to be priorities.

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This is the moment  
to fight for a  
secure, just, and  
equitable world

We will always stand up for a brighter future for all.





SPEECH FROM  
THE THRONE

## CONCLUSION

This decade is still young. With compassion, courage, and determination, we have the power to make it better than how it started.

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But that can only happen by standing together.

Parliamentarians, never before has so much depended on your ability to deliver results for Canadians.

That is what people expect and need from you.

In addition to ending this pandemic, their priorities for this 44<sup>th</sup> Parliament are clear: a more resilient economy, and a cleaner and healthier future for all of our kids.

I do not doubt that you will honour the trust that has been placed in you.

Members of the House of Commons, you will be asked to appropriate the funds to carry out the services and expenditures authorized by Parliament.

Members of the Senate and Members of the House of Commons, may you be equal to the profound trust bestowed on you by Canadians, and may Divine Providence guide you in all your duties.