

# COMMUNIQUÉ

## CONFÉRENCE CONFEDERATION 2000 CONFERENCE

OTTAWA  
IMMEDIATE  
MONDAY, MARCH 4, 1996

### THE CONFEDERATION 2000 CONFERENCES *AN INITIATIVE AIMED AT HELPING TO BUILD A NEW CONSENSUS FOR POLITICAL CHANGE*

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The Business Council on National Issues announced in Ottawa today the convening of The Confederation 2000 Conferences aimed at helping to build a new consensus for political change in Canada.

The Business Council is a non-profit, non-partisan organization composed of the chief executives of Canada's leading companies, and is active in a wide variety of public policy areas including the national and global economy, social policy, the environment and political governance. Its Chairman is Guy Saint-Pierre and its President and Chief Executive is Thomas d'Aquino.

The Confederation 2000 Conferences will be co-chaired by three well-known Canadians: Yves Fortier of Montreal, Peter Lougheed of Calgary, and Judith Maxwell of Ottawa.

More than 100 Canadians from across Canada will be in attendance. The two conferences will take place in Ottawa -- the first at the Chateau Laurier on Friday evening, March 8, and Saturday, March 9; and the second at the Chateau Laurier and Westin Hotels on Friday evening, May 3, and Saturday, May 4.

At the first conference, task forces will be established composed of participants. They will focus on specific issues, carry out their work over a six week period and report their findings and recommendations at the second conference on May 3 and 4. The findings and recommendations will then be offered to First Ministers, Territorial Leaders and national Party Leaders, and will be made public.

Explaining the initiative, Thomas d'Aquino said, "The outcome of the October 30 referendum in Quebec and the growing uncertainty and concern throughout Canada about the country's future has prompted many Canadians to work for change and reconciliation with an unparalleled sense of urgency....

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We at the Business Council on National Issues are among those who desire to make a constructive contribution, believing as we do that Canada -- arguably the finest country in the world -- can and must adapt to changing political and economic circumstances if Canadians are to continue to prosper and live together in harmony in the 21st century."

Mr. d'Aquino added, "The Confederation 2000 conferences are one of a number of initiatives planned by the Council aimed at helping our political leaders and elected representatives with ideas and suggestions about political reform."

"With our initiative, we also are seeking to promote awareness about Canada's extraordinary achievements as a country," he said, "and we are anxious to share our work and ideas with other interested Canadians."

"This is not an attempt to establish a constituent assembly," Mr. d'Aquino stressed. "We believe that the decision-making responsibility rests squarely with those who are democratically elected."

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