Strengthening Canada's Diversity

April 5, 2002 – Unity through diversity. It's a recipe that has served Canada well, and it is one that sets us apart from our neighbour to the south. Canadian history is not without its examples of forced assimilation. Just ask Canada's original peoples.

In recent decades, however, a set of policies and practices have emerged that respect and foster pluralism. Jane Jenson, Director of CPRN's Family Network, and Martin Papillon, Family Network Research Associate, describe these together as Canada's "diversity model" (see their paper, *The "Canadian Diversity Model": A Repertoire in Search of a Framework*, available on our Web site).

Underlying that model is the conviction that there is a strong link between the attachment of Canadians to this country and its pluralism. Recently, in a visit to Ottawa, the Agha Khan described Canada as "a model for the world" in this regard. However, events of the past several months have put our commitment to diversity to the test, some would say even placed it at risk.

In **"Time to Strengthen Canada's Commitment to Diversity"**, a commentary published in the *Toronto Star*, Jane Jenson describes the ingredients of Canada's "diversity model" and what it needs to work effectively. She shows why the recent Agreement between Quebec and the Cree of Northern Quebec, which governs future development on Cree lands, is an important example of the diversity model at work. The principles underlying that successful accord, she suggests, can be applied elsewhere.

Jenson argues that Canadians need to be as concerned about the health of our democratic institutions as we are about border security or new security laws, if we are to maintain an environment within which the country's different communities can thrive together.

You can access or download a copy of her commentary by clicking here.

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