

**SPEAKING NOTES
THE HONOURABLE NOËL A. KINSELLA
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE**

**ON THE OCCASION OF A DINNER HOSTED
BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CZECH SENATE
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, SCIENCE,
CULTURE, HUMAN RIGHTS AND PETITIONS**

**PRAGUE
OCTOBER, 2010**

Your Excellency Chairman Sobotka,
Honourable Senator Jermář,
Honourable Parliamentarians:

It is a great pleasure to be able to join you here in the beautiful Czech Republic and to take in the magnificent views of Prague in your company. It was through the good offices of our host this evening, the Honourable Senator Jermář, that we are here together and I want to thank him for his efforts in helping to make this a memorable visit.

On behalf of the members of the delegation, I would also like to thank Chairman Sobotka for the generous hospitality and goodwill he has shown during our stay in the Czech Republic. Our time here has allowed us to further understand some of the challenges your country is facing and the policy approaches you are pursuing. It has also permitted us to discuss issues of mutual concern and to strengthen cooperation.

It is a particular pleasure to have the opportunity to meet members of the Senate Committee on Education, Science, Culture, Human Rights, and Petitions this evening, as human rights has long been a field in which I have a deep personal interest.

The thirty articles of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* outline principles which have guided human rights legislation and instruments throughout

the world, including our own *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The Declaration is generally accepted as a framework for conducting and evaluating human affairs and it was a Canadian, John Peters Humphry, who was instrumental in drafting it. Canada has established and maintained a tradition of promoting respect for human rights throughout the world and the Czech Republic shares this deep commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights.

Since the end of the Cold War, our countries have cooperated in this area. Canada assisted the Czech Republic in its transition to economic liberalization and democratization. One of the pillars of our assistance program was democratic development and good governance, which depend on respect for human rights. Over the past two decades, your country has made protection and promotion of human rights an important element of your international policies.

As parliamentarians, we help ensure that human rights are respected in our countries. We verify that proposed legislation does not infringe on citizens' rights through legislative oversight; we monitor the application of laws to ensure that rights are preserved. We also study and monitor our governments' international policies to ensure human rights are taken into account.

This evening is an opportunity for us to discuss these various avenues of parliamentary involvement. It is also an opportunity for us to reflect on the issues we have discussed during this visit and to continue those discussions in a congenial atmosphere.

In closing, on behalf of the members of our delegation, I would like to once again thank Senator Jermář and Chairman Sobotka for their generous hospitality. We have greatly enjoyed our time in the Czech Republic and look forward to hosting you in Canada.

Na zdraví (to your health)!