

# **Notes for a Welcome Greeting**

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**FOCAL  
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Good Morning

Bonjour,

Buenos Dias

Bom Dia

Mr. Dade (FOCAL Executive Director)

Mr. Hakim (Inter-American Dialogue)

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI), I join in the general welcome to you all to this conference.

For our visitors from abroad, welcome to Canada and to Ottawa, Canada's capital.

You are here on the first day of fall!

The weather is decidedly autumnal this morning, and the fall colours are not far behind.

We hope you find the temperature bracing, and an aid to clear-thinking.

Personally, I myself just find the cold impertinent.

Would it be too much to ask that winter wait politely at least until our southern visitors had left?

After all, winter is going to own the next six months in this northernmost country of the Western Hemisphere.

(No, Alaska is not more northern, even if you can see Russia from there.)

Canadians may flock south, like the iconic Canada geese.

But the western hemisphere means more to us than a winter refuge from the cold, although that is no small thing.

We have much in common, both in values and interests.

Our nations' respective historical developments are unique in their particularities,

but they are common in their essence.

Our origins are aboriginal,

and our traditions and cultures are Euro-Atlantic, with Asian fusion in more recent decades.

With a few exceptions, we in the western hemisphere have become societies governed by laws, not power,

where the institutions of government matter more than the incumbents who hold office.

We are enriched by migrants from every corner of the earth.

And that diversity is our strength.

We are all part of the New World, built on immigration and integration but, for a long time, also, in isolation from the rest of the globe.

But we are isolated no more.

From China to India to Russia to Europe, the world is coming knocking on our doors, whether we are ready or not.

The current Canadian Government has emphasized the importance it places on the western hemisphere agenda.

The hemispheric agenda is important to CIGI as well, where our interest and expertise are considerable and growing, through our projects in the hemisphere and our researchers and Fellows.

CIGI and our “sister” institution the Canadian International Council (CIC) are members of the hemispheric group of Foreign Relations Councils.

We hosted that group last year at our headquarters in Waterloo to demonstrate our interest in the region,

I, and my colleague, Jennifer Jeffs, CIGI’s Deputy Executive Director, are representing CIGI here today to certify that interest.

I understand that today’s goal is to propose an agenda for the next summit of the Americas.

It is important work, and CIGI is glad to play its small part in facilitating it.

So, once again, thank you very much for coming to Ottawa,.

And good luck in your work.

Thank You