## **Opinion / Editorial Opinion**

How to be a role model for the world How out of touch is Ottawa with its own citizens when it comes to foreign policy and our role in the world?

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How out of touch is Ottawa with its own citizens when it comes to foreign policy and our role in the world?

An awful lot, according to a new report that involves the views of more than 100,000 Canadians.

"I was surprised how disconnected citizens feel from Ottawa," says Shauna Sylvester, who heads Canada's World, a major three-year initiative aimed at involving ordinary citizens in the development of a new international policy role for Canada.

"Citizens don't relate to Ottawa," she says, "They don't see the federal government as a positive actor on the international stage. There is a sense Ottawa is too fixated on domestic issues. At the same time, there is a lack of consultation by Ottawa with citizens."

The initiative that Sylvester heads grew out of the view that Ottawa's foreign policy is a disaster, outdated and out of sync with what Canadians really want to see from their government on issues such as climate change, foreign aid and our military role abroad.

Now, after holding a series of public dialogues across the country in the past year, meeting face-to-face with more than 4,000 Canadians and engaging more than 100,000 Canadians online, the Canada's World team has released a report that offers a unique blueprint for how Ottawa can become a role model for the world when it comes to international relations.

Rather, in many ways it is forward-thinking and reveals a vision of Canada that has changed greatly from the days when we saw ourselves as a global peacekeeper and influential middle power.

The report does not try to prescribe specific policies, such as whether to stay or leave Afghanistan. Instead, it targets five areas where participants felt Canada can be a role model.

First, they want Ottawa to advance the idea of a green economy, reducing our ecological footprint, investing in green technology and supporting cities in long-term sustainable planning.

Second, they support embracing diversity, with Ottawa fostering intercultural dialogue, honouring our links with aboriginal peoples and leveraging our global connections in foreign relations, business and policy development.

Third, they want Ottawa to promote good governance around the world and to get Canadians interested in politics and governance again.

Fourth, they want to foster innovation, especially in green technology, health, the social economy and communications technology.

Fifth, they want to enhance the notion of equality, with Ottawa assuming a leadership role in fighting global poverty