Views of Canada in relation to the second session of the Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law on "Parliaments as promoters of human rights, democracy and the rule of law" (22-23 November 2018, Room XVII, Palais des Nations, Geneva):

In the recent years, sources point to an overall trend towards the erosion of democracy around the world, which includes a growing disconnect between citizens and elites. According to the IPU Global Parliamentary Report 2017: ‘’ the public’s trust in political institutions – including parliaments – has been undermined in recent decades by prominent scandals, allegations of corruption, and other breaches of acceptable behaviour by elected officials across the world. Low levels of trust have a negative impact on parliament’s ability to represent the people and to hold the government to account on behalf of the people.’’ The report also points out that most of the global democracy indexes and surveys are also noticing a global decline in people’s overall trust and confidence in democracy and its institutions. Facing this crisis, well-functioning parliaments, as the cornerstone of democratic governments, have an important role to play in rebuilding the trust towards democracy among their constituents. Canada is thus proposing a topic for the Second Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law on *Parliaments fostering and building trust with populations*. The aim of the discussion would be to **encourage the sharing of best practices and useful strategies that have had a positive impact in enhancing trust among citizens**.

In the discussion, participants could be encouraged to share how they are striving to rebuild and enhance trust in democracy and democratic institutions, whether it be through enabling new laws or regulation to enhance transparency, promoting diversity and inclusion, harnessing youth participation, fostering civic engagement and participation, the creative use of new technologies, reforming liberal democratic institutions - including political parties, etc. Participants could also tackle the challenges they have encountered in rebuilding trust among citizens, as well as the strategies put forward to counter the worrying trends that have emerged from this decline in public trust, which is enabling and creating space for disinformation to be successful – and for people to be more susceptible to alternative forms of governing, including illiberal forms of democracy. It would also be a good venue to have a frank discussion aboutwhat triggered this trend, as we have to understand how we got there in order to restore the trust in democracy and democratic institutions.