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Vietnamese **BULLETIN** vietnamien  
Vietnamese Canadian Federation Fédération vietnamienne du Canada

Vietnamese Canadian Federation  
Fédération vietnamienne du Canada

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**FEDERATION NEWS**

**Vietnamese Canadians welcome new  
Prime Minister and Minister of Canadian  
Heritage and Status of Women**

Following are the letters from the Right Honourable Stephen Harper and the Honourable Bev Oda, in response to VCF's congratulations upon their appointments as Prime Minister of Canada and Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women.

February 24, 2006

Dear Mr. Ngo:

I am pleased to have this opportunity to extend my personal thanks to your warm words of congratulations following the January 23 federal election. I look forward to your continued support as we work to fulfill the mandate we have been given by Canadians.

Once again, thank you for your encouragement and continued support.

Stephen Harper

March 22, 2006

Ut V. Ngo  
President  
Vietnamese Canadian Federation  
249 Rochester Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1R7M9

Dear Mr. Ngo:

Thank you for your kind words of congratulation on my appointment as Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women.

This is a very exciting time for me. It is time to enact positive changes to government, to create new traditions of democracy and to build new cornerstones for the future of Canada.

I look forward to taking on the role and responsibilities that have been bestowed on me. Please accept my best wishes.

Yours sincerely,  
Bev Oda, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Canadian Heritage and Status of Women

**Good-Bye from Out-Going Prime Minister Paul Martin**

Following is the letter from the Right Honourable Paul Martin, former Prime Minister of Canada, responding to VCF's letter expressing the appreciation of the Vietnamese community for his dedication to Canada and the Canadian people.

April 3, 2006

Mr. Ut Ngo  
Vietnamese Canadian Federation  
249 Rochester Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1R 7M9

Dear Mr. Ngo:

Many thanks for your kind words further to the election results in January. Your thoughtful letter touched me deeply.

I have always believed that public life is the highest calling, and I am grateful that I have been able to make a positive contribution to the development of our great nation.

The past 17 years have been tremendously rewarding, whether serving my constituents in LaSalle-Emard; helping to strengthen our economy as Finance Minister; or, as Prime Minister, establishing a new framework for action with Canada's First Nations, Inuit and Metis Nation, the new deal with our cities and communities, and the child care agreement which should continue with the provinces.

The 2006 Election represents both an end and a new beginning for me. Rest assured that I intend to continue to be involved in public life. My time in government has demonstrated to me quite clearly that there is a profound need for advocates for the marginalized members of our society, both here in Canada and around the world. As a result, in the months and years ahead, I plan to dedicate myself to a number of issues.

On behalf of Sheila and our family, I want to thank you again for taking the time to write. It is people like you who have inspired me throughout my public career. As I begin this

new phase of my public life, your kindness is deeply appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Martin

### **Media Relations Workshop in Ottawa**

The Vietnamese Canadian Community Council of Ottawa, in conjunction with VCF, has organized a workshop on Media Relations on March 26, at the Vietnamese Canadian Centre in Ottawa. The purpose of this workshop was to familiarize young volunteers in the community with the process of getting news media interested in, and cover, community events.

Jointly chaired by Tran Kim Chi and Ly Thanh Le, two young volunteer professionals in the Ottawa Vietnamese community, this workshop featured presentations and discussions by John Ruttle, Ottawa News Assignment Editor, representing the CTV networks; Denise Fung, Associate Producer, CBC Radio One, representing both the CBC-TV and the CBC-Radio Networks; Caroline Phillips of the Ottawa Sun; Andrew Cardozo, former Commissioner of the Canadian Radio, Television, and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC); Linda Szeto, Vice-President of the Chinese Canadian National Council; Moe Kyau, Coordinator of the Burmese Community Bureau; Susan Korah of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Canada; Sam Roumani of the Arab community in Ottawa; Hua Tuyen, a VCF volunteer specializing in media relations, and Le Duy Can, VCF's Commissioner for External Affairs.

Based on the deliberations at this workshop, draft guidelines on media relations will be prepared for discussion at the Len Duong Leadership Development Camp, to be

organized by the Vietnamese Culture and Science Association of Toronto, in collaboration with the Vietnamese Association of Toronto and VCF, from June 30 to July 3, 2006 in Puslinch, near Toronto. Once finalized, these guidelines will be made available to VCF's member associations and other Vietnamese organizations.

### **Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project**

The Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project was launched by the Vietnamese Canadian Federation on December 17, 2005, on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Vietnamese community in Canada. The purposes of this project are as follows:

- 1/ To present the historical facts of the quest for freedom of Vietnamese refugees, the majority of whom were the boat people, and their reception worldwide; and*
- 2/ To showcase the contribution of the Vietnamese community to the resettlement countries.*

This museum is expected to be built in Ottawa at an estimated cost of Cdn\$2 million. The completion date is planned for 2008-2010.

This project is currently progressing well. So far, over Cdn\$24,000 has been raised. The Project's Implementation Committee will organize a major fund-raising event in Ottawa in the fall of this year, and VCF has asked its member associations to hold similar events across Canada.

Recently, letters of support have been received from Ralph Klein, Premier of Alberta; Gordon Campbell, Premier of British Columbia; Dennis Fentie, Premier of

Yukon; Tom Hedderson, Minister of Tourism, Recreation and Culture of Newfoundland and Labrador. Previously, letters of support have also been received from Bob Chiareli, Mayor of Ottawa; Marion Dewar, former Mayor of Ottawa; Diane Holmes, City of Ottawa Councillor for the Somerset Ward; Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario; Richard Patten, Member of the Provincial Parliament of Ontario for Ottawa Centre; Paul Dewar, Member of Parliament for Ottawa West; and Senator Mac Harb of Ottawa.

These letters of support are reproduced below.

### **Letters of Support**

Marion Dewar, former Mayor of Ottawa

December 17, 2005

Dear Can,

I am sorry I cannot be with you tonight. This project we are launching is very important, not just to the Vietnamese community but to our city as a whole.

We have often been remiss in celebrating as well as teaching our History. This Museum will be close to the first community where the Refugees settled.

The persons involved will be the Vietnamese and people from the broader community. We must always remember it was the response of people in the community including people like yourself that made the politicians rethink their restrictive policy. Persons across Canada living in towns and cities joined in to do their own sponsorships.

It was unbelievable how quickly the politicians moved when they realized

Canadians were intent on their sponsorship. The Canadian quota for refugees from Southeast Asia was 8,000 in June 1979 and by July 1979 it was amended to 50,000.

This Museum is not going to be just a reminder of those days. It will be an expression of hope, courage and sharing. The Vietnamese that arrived have become wonderful Canadian citizens. They have taught their children their culture and encouraged them to participate in the many broader cultures. We who were here before they arrived benefited by new lasting friendships, knowledge and understanding of other cultures and a rich addition to our existing culture.

With that kind of statement the Museum will make in the heart of Centertown will also be a tool to discover our own history. I hope all of you are ready to work on this project. I can hardly wait to get started, however it will have to wait until after January 23 2006.

In peace.

Marion Dewar

Diane Homes, City Councillor, Somerset Ward

17 January 2006

Can D.Le, Ph.D  
Commissioner for External Affairs  
Vietnamese Canadian Federation  
249 Rochester Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1R 7M9

Re: Vietnamese Boat People Museum

Dear Dr. Le:

I am pleased to extend my support for the proposal to build a Vietnamese Boat People Museum to be built in Ottawa Centre.

Since their arrival thirty years ago, the contribution that the Vietnamese community has made to our municipality has been commendable. The City of Ottawa played an important role in encouraging these new arrivals to come to our city, and it is certainly fitting that we recognize the hardships and sacrifices that were made by so many Vietnamese families - and the relationship that has developed between our communities since 1975.

I look forward to working with you and your project team on the location of the Vietnamese Boat People Museum, which I know will become a significant feature in our community.

With best wishes,

Diane Holmes

Mayor Bob Chiarelli of Ottawa

January 17, 2006

Can D. Le  
Commissioner for External Affairs  
Vietnamese Canadian Federation  
Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project  
Leader  
249 Rochester St.  
Ottawa, ON K1R 7M9

Dear Mr. Le:

In my capacity as Mayor of the City of Ottawa, it is my distinct pleasure to lend my fullest support in principle to the Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project proposed by the Vietnamese Canadian Federation.

I am encouraged that this project would notably assist Vietnamese youths and their posterity to appreciate better the unfathomable hardships, as well as the human and material sacrifices of the 3 million Vietnamese, who abruptly exited, largely by perilous means at sea, the former South Vietnam in the wake of the change in the political and economic landscape of April 1975, in what is now recognized as Vietnam.

The project would also serve as a lasting testimony to the strength of human spirit, steadfastness, ingenuity and significant achievements of the 170,000 Vietnamese professionals, business people, farmers, fishermen, and others who resettled in Canada, including Ottawa.

In addition, the project would help to retell the story of Ottawa 4,000, spearheaded in 1979 by the mayor of the day Marion Dewar, and which was a grassroots humanitarian initiative that successfully secured local sponsorship of 4,000 Vietnamese refugees for resettlement in our nation's capital. This is not only an account of the generosity of the people of Ottawa to open their homes, hearts and community to a recently arrived community of new Canadians; but also the history of the Vietnamese boat peoples' success in building a vibrant and prosperous community in the heart of Ottawa. The local Vietnamese community members' contributions to our city's rich multicultural landscape and economic wealth are immeasurable and merit recognition in this project.

I am confident that with the appropriate assistance from a wide host of supporters that the Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project would prove to be an enduring legacy to the successful resettlement of the

original 4,000 Vietnamese refugees, and allow future generations to celebrate their Vietnamese heritage with a deeper understanding of their contributions to Canadian society.

Sincerely,

Bob Chiarelli

Richard Patten, Member of Provincial  
Parliament of Ontario, Ottawa Centre

February 9, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

I am proud to lend my support to the Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project.

This Museum will come thirty years after thousands of South Vietnamese refugees came to Canada. The hardships and tragedies were only known to these brave souls who became known as the Boat People.. .until now. The Vietnamese Boat People Museum will not only show the present generation of Vietnamese Canadians but all Canadians their plight. It will also stand as a testament to the endurance of life of these brave people. Freedom was their goal and it was attained through courageous efforts.

The Vietnamese community is an integral part of Ottawa Centre. This vibrant community is hardworking and successful. It is befitting that within the heart of our City the doors of this Museum will open to welcome, educate, and honour the lives of the Boat People. The Vietnamese Boat People Museum will be built on a foundation that will honour the sacrifices of those who gave their lives in the pursuit of freedom and will stand as a testament of those who arrived safely to build the dreams of the future.

The museum is a wonderful undertaking and many thanks are owed to the Vietnamese Canadian Federation. As the Member of Provincial Parliament for Ottawa Centre I proudly extend my wishes for the success of this worthy project.

Sincerely,

Richard Patten

Senator Mac Harb, Ottawa

February 2, 2006

Dear Friends:

It is a privilege for me to provide this letter in support of the proposal to build a museum honouring the Vietnamese Boat People.

As a municipal and later federal politician representing an area which became home to many of Canada's Vietnamese refugees, I know firsthand not only the hardships they escaped but the richness they added to our community and to Canada as a whole.

Project 4000 was a huge success. The refugees who found safe haven in our city wasted no time establishing a strong and vibrant presence in their new found homeland. The list of their accomplishments is lengthy and far reaching. I fully support the creation of this memorial, both to celebrate the determination of these refugees as well as the generosity and far-sightedness of the Canadians who worked so hard to provide a warm welcome and a firm foundation upon which to build new lives.

The benefits of the Vietnamese Boat People Museum will go beyond commemoration however. It is apparent that this facility will serve educational and cultural purposes as

well as being a significant addition to the Nation's Capital. Its location, planned to be in the vicinity of the LeBreton Flats area, will ensure ready access to local residents and national and international visitors alike.

We have the opportunity before us to ensure that an important element of our municipal and national history is preserved for future generations. We cannot afford to let this chance pass us by.

Sincerely,

Senator Mac Harb

Premier Dalton McGuinty of Ontario

January 2006

A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

On behalf of the Government of Ontario, I am delighted to congratulate the Vietnamese Canadian Federation (VCF) on the launch of the Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project.

In Ontario, we celebrate difference and thrive on diversity. I would like to commend the Vietnamese community for its many invaluable contributions to the social, cultural and economic life of our province. Take pride in knowing that you have made Ontario — and Canada as a whole — an even better place to live.

Each newcomer community in Canada has its own special story to tell, its own unique history to record. With the inauguration of the Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project, the VCF and its member organizations across Canada will have the opportunity to document for posterity the history of Vietnamese Canadians: from their perilous flight from their homeland 30 years ago to

their resettlement, challenges and triumphs in Canada.

This project will not only serve as an enduring legacy of the Vietnamese Canadian experience, but also will pay tribute to the community's remarkable capacity to flourish in its adopted country and to the many Canadians who demonstrated generosity, openness and understanding toward those refugees who sought safe haven here.

It takes a great deal of hard work and collaborative effort to initiate an undertaking of this scale. I would like to give due and deserved recognition to the VCF and its members nationwide for initiating this vital project.

Please accept my best wishes for every success with the Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project.

Dalton McGuinty

Premier Dennis Fentie of Yukon

March 13, 2006

Mr. Can D. Le  
Commissioner for External Affairs,  
Vietnamese Canadian Federation  
249 Rochester Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1R 7M9

Dear Mr. Le:

Thank you for your letter about the Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project.

All Canadians should be inspired by the challenges and hardships that many Vietnamese faced as they fled their homeland to establish new lives here in Canada.

Many Yukoners-have arrived from different places around the world, including Vietnam, to establish themselves here. They have brought with them their energy, culture and experiences, important contributions to our community here and in Canada as a whole.

On behalf of the Government of Yukon, I am pleased to see your community starting a project such as this. It takes considerable hard work and your organization deserves recognition for their effort and initiative.

I wish you every success in your development of the Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project.

Yours truly,

Dennis Fentie

Premier Gordon Campbell of British Columbia

March 2006

*A Message from the Premier of British Columbia*

On behalf of the province of British Columbia, it is my pleasure to extend congratulations to the Vietnamese Canadian Federation (VCF) as they recently celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Vietnamese community in Canada, and began a new project, the *Vietnamese Boat People Museum*.

The stories of Vietnamese Canadians, their experiences in Vietnam, their flight to Canada, and their resettlement in our nation, are important and worth commemorating in this new museum. Canada is a different place because of the contributions made by Vietnamese refugees and we will all benefit

as those stories are shared and international history is remembered.

Canada is truly a multicultural nation, bringing together many peoples from diverse backgrounds. Organizations such as the VCF enrich the lives of all citizens through their commitment to building the Vietnamese community, preserving and sharing Vietnamese culture and fostering a spirit of mutual responsibility.

On behalf of the people of British Columbia, I hope the *Vietnamese Boat People Museum* is a meaningful and successful endeavour for the VCF.

Sincerely,

Gordon Campbell

Premier Ralph Klein of Alberta

April 3, 2006

Dr. Can D. Le  
Commissioner for External Affairs  
Vietnamese Canadian Federation  
Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project  
Leader  
249 Rochester Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1R 7M9

Dear Dr. Le:

Thank you very much for your recent letter advising me of the Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project. I appreciate you taking the time to share this information.

We are fortunate to live in a country where diverse cultures and heritage are treasured. It is our heritage which represents the collective memories of who we are, from where we came, and the priceless traditions

which have been formed and passed on from our ancestors. This project will enrich our lives by showcasing the traditions and interests of the Vietnamese culture, while encouraging understanding in our communities at large.

Please accept my best wishes for continued success in your endeavours.

Sincerely yours,

Ralph Klein

The Honourable Tom Hedderson  
Minister of Tourism, Recreation and Culture,  
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Department of Tourism, Culture and  
Recreation

Office of the Minister

March 13, 2006

Dr. Can D. Le  
Commissioner for External Affairs  
Vietnamese Canadian Federation  
Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project  
Leader  
249 Rochester Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1R 7M9

On behalf of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, it is my distinct pleasure to lend my fullest support in principle to the Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project proposed by the Vietnamese Canadian Federation, a project that will be a lasting testimony to the strength of the Vietnamese people, their strong spirit, steadfastness, and ingenuity.

This project will commemorate the immeasurable hardships and sacrifices of the 3 million Vietnamese, who risked their lives at sea to leave the former South Vietnam in the wake of the enormous political and economic changes sweeping through their country in the 1970s and to secure for themselves and their children a brighter future in Canada and other countries.

The Vietnamese community's contributions to Canada's diverse cultural landscape and their contributions to the nation's economy merit the recognition they will receive through the Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project. This project will acknowledge the extraordinary ability of the Vietnamese people to adapt to life in their new home. It will also be a tribute to the many Canadians who opened their homes and hearts to welcome the more than 170,000 Vietnamese who landed on our shores and built new lives in our country.

The Vietnamese Canadian Federation and its members nationwide are to be commended for taking on this difficult, but extremely significant mission, which will reveal to all Canadians the rich and fascinating story of the Vietnamese presence in Canada.

Please accept my best wishes for every success with this important project.

Sincerely,

Tom Hedderson, M.H.A.  
Harbour Main-Whitbourne  
Minister

## MEDIA REVIEW

### Commission of Europe: Parliamentary Assembly

#### **Need for international condemnation of crimes of totalitarian communist regimes: Resolution 1481 (2006)**

1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to its *Resolution 1096* (1996) on measures to dismantle the heritage of the former communist totalitarian systems.

2. The totalitarian communist regimes which ruled in Central and Eastern Europe in the last century, and which are still in power in several countries in the world, have been, without exception, characterised by massive violations of human rights. The violations have differed depending on the culture, country and the historical period and have included individual and collective assassinations and executions, death in concentration camps, starvation, deportations, torture, slave labour and other forms of mass physical terror, persecution on ethnic or religious base, violation of freedom of conscience, thought and expression, of freedom of press, and also lack of political pluralism.

3. The crimes were justified in the name of the class struggle theory and the principle of dictatorship of the proletariat. The interpretation of both principles legitimised the elimination of people who were considered harmful to the construction of a new society and, as such, enemies of the totalitarian communist regimes. A vast number of victims in every country concerned were its own nationals. It was the case particularly of peoples of the former USSR who by far outnumbered other peoples in terms of the number of victims.

4. The Assembly recognises that, in spite of the crimes of totalitarian communist regimes, some European communist parties have made contributions to achieving democracy.

5. The fall of totalitarian communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe has not been followed in all cases by an international investigation of the crimes committed by them. Moreover, the authors of these crimes have not been brought to trial by the international community, as was the case with the horrible crimes committed by National Socialism (nazism).

6. Consequently, public awareness of crimes committed by totalitarian communist regimes is very poor. Communist parties are legal and active in some countries, even if in some cases they have not distanced themselves from the crimes committed by totalitarian communist regimes in the past.

7. The Assembly is convinced that the awareness of history is one of the preconditions for avoiding similar crimes in the future. Furthermore, moral assessment and condemnation of crimes committed play an important role in the education of young generations. The clear position of the international community on the past may be a reference for their future actions.

8. Moreover, the Assembly believes that those victims of crimes committed by totalitarian communist regimes who are still alive or their families, deserve sympathy, understanding and recognition for their sufferings.

9. Totalitarian communist regimes are still active in some countries of the world and crimes continue to be committed. National interest perceptions should not prevent

countries from adequate criticism of present totalitarian communist regimes. The Assembly strongly condemns all those violations of human rights.

10. The debates and condemnations which have taken place so far at national level in some Council of Europe member states cannot give dispensation to the international community from taking a clear position on the crimes committed by the totalitarian communist regimes. It has a moral obligation to do so without any further delay.

11. The Council of Europe is well placed for such a debate at international level. All former European communist countries, with the exception of Belarus, are now its members and the protection of human rights and the rule of law are basic values for which it stands.

12. Therefore, the Parliamentary Assembly strongly condemns the massive human rights violations committed by the totalitarian communist regimes and expresses sympathy, understanding and recognition to the victims of these crimes.

13. Furthermore, it calls on all communist or post-communist parties in its member states which have not so far done so to reassess the history of communism and their own past, clearly distance themselves from the crimes committed by totalitarian communist regimes and condemn them without any ambiguity.

14. The Assembly believes that this clear position of the international community will pave the way to further reconciliation. Furthermore, it will hopefully encourage historians throughout the world to continue their research aimed at the determination and objective verification of what took place.

**Rising above tragedy to help needy  
Tough life "made me a very strong person"  
Husband's death prompted return to  
school**

*Mar. 27, 2006. 08:07 AM*

*Nicholas Keung  
Immigration / Diversity Reporter,  
Toronto Star*

Fleeing the grasp of the Communist regime in Vietnam, Kim Hoang Trinh and her sister got into a small boat one summer night in the early 1980s.

Cramped with 75 people, the craft broke down and floated aimlessly for days before an Indonesian fishing crew spotted it and took the passengers to the safety of a refugee camp.

What's atypical about this typical "boat people" story is that, unlike most of her compatriots, Trinh couldn't take a blue-collar job when she arrived in Canada as a refugee. "I had polio when I was 1 year old," says Trinh. "I've lost use of my left arm and my right leg is weak. I wasn't able to do any labour work."

Then a 22-year-old accounting graduate, Trinh spent a year learning English in Prince George, B.C., before joining her sister in Toronto, where she was accepted to a 45-week job-training program offered by the Toronto Office Skills Training Project, the predecessor of today's Skills for Change.

One of four graduates from the inaugural class of 1983, Trinh found her first job as a data control clerk at Toronto General Hospital and later as a bookkeeper for another employer.

Trinh had long dreamed of working in social services, hoping to give something back to the society that had extended her a helping hand, but it took a tragedy to provoke that career change.

After her husband drowned in an accident in Lake Ontario in 1998, Trinh decided to go back to school and began social service studies at Sheridan College.

"Before my husband's death, I just didn't have the will power to do that," notes the recipient of the 2006 Skills for Change Graduate Award. "But I really wanted to use my power to make a change, to make a difference. If I could make one person smile and give the person some hope, I would be very happy."

Today, Trinh is program manager at the Vietnamese Association of Toronto, and has volunteered to help youth and seniors at community organizations such as the Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre and the Phap Van Buddhist Cultural Centre.

Trinh counts herself fortunate to be in a professional field where she can better herself and help the needy. "I never ask the question why, but I always ask how. I never asked why God took my husband away from me. I just accepted it," she says.

"Life has been tough, but it's made me a very strong person," she adds. "The (New Pioneers) award isn't really about me. It is a recognition of all those who have the compassion to help others like me. Without them, there wouldn't be me today."

**The Vietnamese Bulletin *vietnamien* is a quarterly newsletter published by the Vietnamese Canadian Federation.**

**The Federation welcomes contributions to this publication from its member associations and from the public, as well as suggestions or comments that may help improve its format or enrich its content.**

**Additional copies can be obtained by writing to:**

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**E-mail: [viet\\_ca\\_federation@bellnet.ca](mailto:viet_ca_federation@bellnet.ca)**

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*Contributions to the  
Vietnamese Boat People Museum Project  
can be sent to:*

*Vietnamese Canadian Centre /  
Museum Project  
249 Rochester Street, Ottawa  
ON K1R 7M9  
Canada*

*All donations over Cdn/US\$5.00 will be issued a receipt for income tax purposes, applicable in either Canada or the U.S.*