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Happy New Year!

A New Year's message from the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt ? 29th Lieutenant Governor of Ontario

In my travels around the province as Lieutenant Governor during the past year, I have been inspired and moved by the warmth of your welcome and the hospitality freely given in communities large and small. I treasure the moments that I have spent with so many of you.

One of the greatest privileges of this job is acting as Ontario's ?Storyteller-in-Chief?. The stories I tell are all yours: your accomplishments, treasured moments, and unique histories. In this context, it has been a particular pleasure to honour our veterans, young and old, who every day stand as a testament to service and duty. We owe them our gratitude and respect. I have been touched by the ways that communities across the province recognize the sacrifices of those who serve.

While visiting more than 40 communities, I have sensed the tremendous pride that you have in our province and country. We are blessed with an environment of unparalleled and spectacular diversity, rich with life and natural resources that have sustained generations. In the 21st century, we are called upon to renew our commitment to be stewards of the environment as we face the unprecedented threat of climate change. The sheer talent and ingenuity of the people I have met leave me optimistic about Ontario's role in confronting environmental challenges and building a more sustainable and harmonious world.

In times of social change and conflict, it is often tempting to concentrate on what divides us, rather than what we share in common. Yet Ontarians are a generous and understanding people, a fact highlighted by the recent outpouring of support shown in communities across Ontario towards newly arrived Syrian families. Let us continue to embrace and treasure diversity as something that unites us as Canadians.

In this past year, we have moved further along the path of reconciliation with Canada's Aboriginal peoples. True reconciliation will require deep thinking and societal change, but also compassion and individual action. I am confident that more Ontarians will get involved in this important and ongoing dialogue in the years to come.

As we prepare to mark the 150th anniversary of Confederation in 2017, I invite you to join me in Kingston, the first capital of the United Province of Canada, for the annual Lieutenant Governor's New Year's Levee. It will take place on Friday, January 1, 2016 at The Grand Theatre in Kingston from 2 to 5 p.m.

As The Queen's representative in Ontario, I wish you a healthy and joyous holiday season. May we recognize just how blessed we are in this province, and may we continually strive for peace on earth in the New Year.