



The Group of 78
Le Groupe des 78

Group of 78 Luncheon Speaker Series

Susanne Tamás

Director of Governmental Relations, Bahá'í Community of Canada

Canada's Office of Religious Freedom: What Lies Ahead?

DATE: Wednesday , October 26, 2011

TIME: 12:00 noon

PLACE: Palais Imperial Restaurant, 311- 313 Dalhousie St., Ottawa

COST: \$30 for luncheon and presentation

\$5 for presentation only

(For presentation only, please plan to arrive by 12:45. Coffee and tea will be available.)

RESERVATIONS: group78@web.net or 613-230-0860 by Monday, October 24, 2011.

We regret that late registrations cannot be accepted.

The group is required to pay for those who reserve but do not come.

Therefore, individuals who do not cancel their reservations at least 24 hours before the luncheon will be billed \$30.

The Government has just announced that, as a foreign policy priority, it is establishing an office of religious freedom. Some have expressed serious skepticism about the Government's motivation and intentions for action. The Baha'i Community of Canada, although it did not advocate such an initiative, nonetheless welcomed it.

Susanne Tamás will explore the increased emphasis being placed on the right to freedom of religion or belief by governments at home and abroad, the link between freedom of religion or belief, development and democracy and the challenges inherent in the promotion of this freedom, the prevention of intolerance and the protection of those suffering the consequences of religious persecution.

She will share her thinking and invite you to share your comments and concerns on such questions as: What advice would you have for the government regarding the structure and mandate of the office? What questions will it need to address? What should be the benchmarks and standards of accountability by which civil society could or should monitor the government's role on the issue? What is the responsibility of civil society in the promotion of freedom of religion or belief and the elimination of intolerance?

Susanne Tamás is Director of Governmental Relations for the Bahá'í Community of Canada, a position she has held since the establishment of the Bahá'í Office of Government Relations in Ottawa in 1997. Susanne also participates as a member of the Bahá'í International Community's delegation to sessions of the UN General Assembly Third Committee and Human Rights Council and has facilitated human rights seminars with national Baha'i representatives around the world. She has served as an elected member of the national governing body of the Bahá'ís of Canada for the past twelve years. Formerly a teacher, social worker, Registrar and Manager of Student Services at community colleges, Susanne has two children and five grandchildren and lives in Almonte with her husband Andy.