

In this opening address for the Resilience 2026 conference, Leslie Church, representing the Government of Canada, emphasizes that Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) is far more than a personal health struggle. She acknowledges it as a fundamental issue of accessibility, dignity, and human rights. With over a million Canadians affected, everyday environments frequently act as barriers that prevent people from participating in work, healthcare, and community life. While Canada has established legal frameworks like the Accessible Canada Act and the Canadian Human Rights Act to promote a barrier-free country, Ms. Church identifies a significant gap between these high-level legislative commitments and the daily reality of those living with MCS. She stresses that true inclusion requires moving beyond policy on paper to implement practical and actionable solutions, such as reducing chemical exposure at the source and improving product transparency.

Ms. Church's presence as a federal official signals a growing momentum and a pivotal shift toward institutional recognition of MCS, bolstered by international support from bodies like the United Nations and the American Medical Association. By framing MCS as an accessibility crisis, she implores policymakers and scientific associations to treat the removal of environmental barriers as a foundational requirement for equality. This speech serves as a call for a harmonized global approach, suggesting that by aligning Canadian research and leadership with international standards, governments can finally make the promise of inclusion a reality. Ultimately, the address highlights that solving the MCS crisis is not just a medical necessity but a requirement for a society that values the right of every individual to navigate the world safely and with dignity.