

organization more effective. Besides the UN, the Commonwealth and the French-speaking countries I have just been talking about contribute in many ways to the strengthening and diversification of our relations with Africa. I will not take the time to list all the multilateral institutions in which we are active members, but it is a fact that Canada could not have developed without them.

Fourthly, Canada is facing a number of constraints that it must take into account to be realistic in its action. There are budget constraints, to begin with; these oblige us to concentrate our efforts both in terms of the number of countries where we can claim to be working effectively and in terms of the fields in which this activity is being carried on, which are those in which we have acquired abilities that are acknowledged world-wide. Unlike other countries that are more populous or have gained a greater understanding of the Third World countries over the centuries, Canada does not yet have enough managers with the experience needed to direct projects implemented in geographical, cultural and economic contexts different from our own. That is why we want to give increasing importance to non-governmental organizations, some of which have staff members who have had the experience of spending large parts of their lives in Africa, Asia or Latin America.

Fifthly, in the last few years Canadian business people have shown a growing interest in doing business on the African continent. Of course the figures are still modest, but the trend is significant. Consider, for example, that over the five-year period from 1978 to 1982 the volume of both our exports and our imports has tripled, and that Algeria, for instance, is now one of our major trading partners on a world scale. We are hoping that this new trend will grow in the coming years.

Finally, regional peace and stability are essential conditions for economic and trade development. When requested, Canada will continue to assist in solving the great conflicts that arise on the continent. Similarly, the Canadian people attach considerable importance to the question of human rights, the fate of the refugees and the dignity of the person; Canadian foreign policy will necessarily be inspired by those values, whatever the location or the circumstances.

As I said earlier, I am assuming my responsibilities, and in a sense the study of relations between Africa and Canada, with an open mind. However, on the basis of the facts I have just listed, a certain outline is already evident. I can assure you that development problems will always be among our government's top priorities. My colleague Mr Wilson confirmed at the recent Commonwealth Finance Ministers' Conference in Toronto that Canada is maintaining its objective to allocate 0.7% of its Gross National Product to development programs until 1990. However, changes may prove necessary in the means our government employs to make the tools available to us more effective.

In the coming months, I intend to visit some countries to see at first hand the effects of this economic crisis that is particularly affecting the African countries and to discuss with some governments how Canada could play a more effective role in this area, and in all areas involved in close international relations. I will find out about the