

three years, it has been my privilege, on behalf of Canada, to meet Anatoly Scharansky in Jerusalem, and receive his thanks for the unrelenting support of the Canadians who sought his freedom; to host in Ottawa some of the mothers of "the disappeared" of Argentina, who had come to discuss human rights institutions with us, because they trust Canada more than other countries; to visit remote Asian villages where Canadians are overcoming tradition and despair so children can live and countries develop. There is a lot to say about Canada's role in the world.

Not meaning to be exclusive, let me single out four areas where our role may be particularly important.

One, of course, is Africa, a continent of immense potential and terrible problems. My first visit abroad, as Foreign Minister, was to Ethiopia on the way back from the tragic funeral of Indira Gandhi, because our Prime Minister wanted to see what more Canada could do to respond to the shocking famine wracking that country. Canada, Canadians, responded magnificently then, and our reach into Africa has deepened and grown. Canada is one of the principle aid donors on the continent, giving approximately 900 million dollars last fiscal year. Monique Landry was the only Minister from the western world to be invited to attend the recent continental conference in Nigeria on Africa economic recovery. Brian Mulroney is the only head of government of an economic summit country to have visited southern Africa since the independence of Zimbabwe. Last year, Canada played a leading role at the UN Special Assembly on Africa. Ambassador Stephen Lewis has been named the Secretary General's "Special Adviser" on African economic recovery.

Sharing roots in the Commonwealth and La Francophonie, respected as a bridge between developed and developing countries, we are uniquely placed to contribute to development and stability in Africa. Other Western countries have more power; few have our influence, and our challenge is to use that influence constructively, whether the question is dealing with the IMF, or modernizing agriculture, or seeking a peaceful end to apartheid.