

vulnerable to change. Included in this ever-changing environment are the changing demand for commodities; the application of trade barriers and protectionism by developed countries even while they insist on action by us to improve our economies; the nature of the global financial market; the rapidly advancing forms of information exchange and communication. Development strategies must respond to this changing environment. Our countries have to be able to adapt quickly if our economies are not to suffer further recession and if our growth objectives are to be met.

What, then, should be our development priorities to the year 2000? While not daring to proclaim a prescription for our region, I can say that in general terms, the adjustment process must be continued. Our emphasis has to be on higher productivity and the use of appropriate technology for increased efficiency and to generate greater trade flows. The expansion and improvement of the productive base and concomitantly, a reduced dependence on imports, are a *sine qua non* for our development. We must also improve our capacity to attract and sustain investments, both local and foreign. This requires the adoption and implementation of long-term policies to maintain and increase confidence. All this requires domestic and regional stability.

However, it would be unrealistic to expect investments alone to provide the financing necessary to fuel these engines of growth and socio-economic development. What of aid? Academicians have written about the aid and dependency link. Governments have experienced it. But as my Prime Minister said in his address to the Special Session of ECLAC held in Mexico last January, "If aid plugs the gaps while we gather strength, we can adopt that objective as a practical goal of development strategy". The prospects for increased aid flows may be gloomy, but we must continue to seek the best possible terms and conditions for aid.

So too must we seek to increase our access to the multilateral financial institutions under terms and conditions which do not generate negative and counter-productive social costs. It is becoming increasingly evident that debtor countries cannot deal with their individual debt problems in isolation from the experiences of each other. A debtor's cartel is obviously not the answer, but we must collaborate if these institutions are to become more sensitive to our adjustment problems.

Without peace and security the best strategies for development must fail. Thus a priority must be resolving the socio-politically divisive problems which engender violence and instability. Civil and political rights must be unswervingly respected and to the full extent permitted by our economies; economic, social and cultural rights must be guaranteed and enjoyed by all our peoples. This must be so since our ultimate objective should always be ensuring the welfare of our peoples.

Our foreign policy should continue to reflect the principle of good-neighbourly relations with all states, of our region in particular, as well as with powers with influence in our region on the basis of mutual respect and