

opportunity to witness at the General Assembly a few weeks ago.

From a number of perspectives, the Commonwealth enjoys many advantages for effecting change in North-South relations, even though it is itself comprised of nations belonging to both developed and developing nations. For one thing, it serves as a bridge between the two groups of nations, by promoting an awareness of mutual Commonwealth interests and interdependencies - and in this it again mirrors the growing interdependent nature of our world.

The Commonwealth also provides a rare opportunity for high-level consultations in an informal, frank and intimate setting, avoiding the rhetorical or adversary character of certain other international fora. More importantly, it need not be dominated by bloc-to-bloc attitudes or strategies - factors which too often result in the rigidity and inflexibility which hamper international resolution of problems.

It can also facilitate the mutual influencing of perceptions and the moderating of extreme positions, thereby generating more balanced and pragmatic approaches to problem resolution.

Its function is best summed up in the words of its Secretary-General in his report for 1979: "The Commonwealth cannot negotiate for the world; but it can help the world to negotiate."

From Canada's perspective as a developed nation, we have a special interest in advancing the North-South dialogue -- a perspective which emerges from our own history. In my recent speech to the Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on this subject, I expressed it this way:

"In many ways, our national history and culture - and our relative youth - have given us a consciousness of many of the realities of both North and South. Nature has blessed us with an abundance of resources that has enabled us to take a place as one of the world's more industrialized nations. But we remain a heavy exporter of natural resources and an importer of capital and technology, and hence we share many of the concerns