



# Statements and Speeches

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## A CHALLENGE OF HISTORIC PROPORTIONS

Opening Statement to the Ministerial Meeting of the Conference on International Economic Co-operation by the Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, President of the Privy Council of Canada and Co-Chairman of the Conference, Paris, May 30, 1977.

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In the closing days of 1975, I suggested to the first ministerial session of this Conference on International Economic Co-operation (CIEC) that we faced a challenge of historic proportions; in the next three days we must finalize our present response to that challenge. I remain confident that we can meet it, recognizing the conference is a step in a longer journey along a necessary path that must eventually take us all towards a new global order.

The CIEC, with its membership drawn from 27 industrialized and developing nations, is a unique conference in its structure and approach. It deals with a world faced by a need for fundamental and permanent adjustment — a world in which developing countries face intensified problems and yet are gaining a new awareness of their potential. It has an almost universal focus in terms of the issues before it, yet its deliberations have been careful, comprehensive and innovative. These fundamental and complex questions deserve the long hours of discussion they have received over the past months. An immediate gain is our greatly-advanced comprehension of and sensibility to them. Many of these questions have no simple answer; for some, even at the close of our present discussions, we shall have only completed a leg of a major but essential voyage, since their ultimate implementation and resolution must rest elsewhere.

We have already made real progress in some areas, such as long-term growth of the IBRD (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) capital, commitments to substantial increases in ODA (official development assistance), the necessity to reduce dependence on hydrocarbons, and we have endorsed a decade on African infrastructure.

In our continuing deliberations, we must strive to focus our attention on the feasible and the most important amongst the proposals presented to us by the senior officials' meeting. These are areas where concrete advances can result if we resolve certain essential principles and policies. It would be too easy to fail to focus on the issues most needing our attention when almost every issue on the table has global and major national implications; it is a cruel dilemma faced by this conference throughout its life but one I hope we can discipline ourselves to accept.

Success will not come easily for us. The extent to which we succeed will depend upon the new commitments we can all make in the next three days. This conference and the