



Statements and Speeches

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NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

An Address by the Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, to the Closing Session of the North-South Round Table Conference of the Society for International Development, Ottawa, November 16, 1980

...Development co-operation and the North-South dialogue, with all their complexities and apparent contradictions, have all too often been relegated to specialists and bureaucrats. That this should be so seems regrettable when we think of this dramatic reality: the most basic needs of some 800 million people — for food, for shelter, for firewood, for water, for health care — are not being met; two-thirds of the people of this planet are falling behind not only in terms of their well-being but of their ability to fulfil their potential and that this environment is bound to influence the future of the more fortunate nations.

While our publics are not blind to this situation, they have trouble seeing how the North-South dialogue and the international development effort are doing much to improve it. These are subjects upon which greater political debate, based on a clear statement of the issues involved, is essential if we are to achieve the public support needed for long-term progress.

One of the most welcome efforts in public "consciousness-raising" has been the Brandt Commission Report. Here in Canada that Report has provided an essential focus to the work of our Parliamentary Task Force on North-South Relations. This Task Force, which has provided a public forum for hearing testimony on all aspects of relations between developed and developing countries, will publish its conclusions next month. I look forward to the public debate of its findings and recommendations. I am particularly concerned that the valuable effort of this dedicated group be sustained by the Parliament of Canada in a continuing way. Our own North-South Institute has made a significant contribution to public awareness of international development issues, including the North-South dimension of sectoral and general economic policies.

My strongest impressions of the North-South dialogue were formed during the 27-country Conference on International Economic Co-operation (CIEC) which met in Paris from December 1975 to June 1977. One of the co-chairmen of this Conference was Dr. Perez-Guerreiro of Venezuela and I was the other.

The CIEC experience taught me what a broad range of issues comprise the North-South dialogue, how complex they are, and how slow can be their resolution. The experience also brought home to me very strikingly the great diversity in the state of economic development and in the preoccupations and interests of the developing countries, and, I might add, of the developed countries as well. Often I felt that the co-chairing countries, Canada for the industrialized group and Venezuela for the developing countries, had as much or more in common in political outlook and

Importance of
Brandt Report