

TRANSLATION

Neither countries of the North nor those of the South constitute homogeneous groups. In spite of their diversity, the South countries draw their feeling of unity from the convictions they share and from a common perception of their position in the world. Among other things, they are convinced that the international economic system has been overly favourable to the rich countries, and that is why they are asking that the rules of the game be changed. They want the system to be more accommodating for them. The poorest among them entertain more limited ambitions: they only want to survive, to improve their lot to a certain extent, and to keep their societies intact, and that regardless of forces and situations over which they often have no control whatsoever.

We should not wonder if developing countries seek to use existing international institutions to achieve their aims. New industrialized countries, such as Brazil, are ever more active within the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Canada itself contributed to set up post-war international institutions because it looked upon them as a means of reducing its own vulnerability and opening new avenues for international co-operation.

Unfortunately, the poorest countries are the ones which will probably benefit the least from any change in the institutions or in the exchange and payment system which might result from the North-South negotiations. It is towards those poorest countries -- Haiti, Honduras and Guyana -- that Canada will continue to direct its bilateral aid. In fact, our bilateral public aid to development has always been concentrated on low-income developing nations. During the 1970s, that concentration accounted for an average of 75 per cent of our funds earmarked for public aid to development. Canada ranks first among industrialized nations in terms of percentage of aid to development which it gives to the poorest countries. The main objective of the Canadian programme of co-operation and development is to support the efforts which the developing nations are themselves making to meet the needs of their own people. To that end, the bilateral programme will be focused on three priority sectors: agriculture, energy, and human resources development. It is in those three sectors that Canada's resources are best tailored to the needs of developing countries. We will be giving priority treatment to those sectors in the coming years.