

most countries, including Canada, are undertaking in one form or another these days. The decisions can have social and political costs. It is difficult, but vital, to sustain the effort. I am aware of the hardships that many Cubans are currently undergoing. It is with this understanding that Canada already has provided emergency humanitarian relief, most recently in response to an appeal by the World Food Program. The fact that Cuba has begun to adjust is encouraging, and we wish the Government well in pursuing vigorously a program of economic adjustment. I think this conference will contribute to the process.

We also wish to encourage and support political development here, as we do in other countries, both in this hemisphere and elsewhere. Cuba has made some real human rights accomplishments, notably in the areas of economic and social rights. Cuba's health care and educational systems have been models for other countries. I would also stress that when we speak of human rights and democratic development, we do not have a single westernized model. Rather, we are focusing on respect for certain freedoms that are set out in such international instruments as the UN [United Nations] Declaration on Human Rights. These issues form part of the bedrock of Canadian foreign policy. Thus, Canada will make human rights and democratic development an area of continuing discussion with Cuba, in order that Cuban accomplishments in the areas I have mentioned can be mirrored elsewhere in the areas of political and civil rights. We are prepared to co-operate with Cuba as it moves ahead in this area.

The fact of change in Cuba is one of the reasons for my being here. This is very much an introductory visit, one in which I have sought to learn about realities here and how the Government and people of Cuba see the future development of their country. We in the Canadian government have a long-standing belief that whatever our differences with another country may be, an open, honest dialogue is important. That is why our formal relationship with Cuba has been unbroken since it was established in 1945. Even at times when we have had considerable differences of view on Africa, on East-West relations, on the nature of political change in Latin America and, more recently, on human rights and good governance, we have maintained our ties and our discourse.

The Canadian government has been in the habit of describing Canada-Cuba relations in recent years as active and positive; and I think that certainly characterizes the thick web of unofficial, private links that many Canadian organizations, companies and individuals have with their Cuban counterparts.

Some of these unofficial links are concrete and measurable. Cuba is Canada's second largest trading partner after Puerto Rico in the Caribbean/Central American region. Our two-way trade