

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Distinguished Delegates,

It has been almost three weeks since I last had the great honour to address this Assembly. Then, we were embarking with hope on the first steps of this important Special Session. Now, with mixed emotions, and I know physical exhaustion by many, we are seeing it draw to a close.

I have come here in this closing phase in order to demonstrate personally the importance Canada attaches to the Session and to the issues it has faced. I would also like to pay tribute to all those, Delegates and Secretariat alike, who have laboured with such intensity and dedication over past weeks. Although all our hopes have not been met, although compromises by definition never satisfy the goals of everyone; we must always bear in mind that this Session is part of a longer term process -- where the objectives are not the drafting of words but the instigation of action. Indeed, it seems to me that, sealed in negotiating fora, we run the risk of becoming overwhelmed by artificialities -- and of forgetting that huge global problems remained unsolved. It is not surprising that the world's poor do not always understand the intricacies of our verbal exchanges.

Mr. President, I, like I am sure, all other Delegates, am particularly disappointed that the Session could not reach total agreement on procedures to launch the Global Negotiations. While I fully realize that genuine differences of principle were involved, I regret that, in a spirit of compromise, these differences could not all be bridged. I would like to compliment, however, all those who sought to build that bridge, including our Canadian Ambassador, in his role as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole. But, as I said earlier, this is part of a larger process. I therefore have to hope that the nations here will gather up their strength once more and make a renewed effort in the coming months to complete the bridge between them. Through compromise and dedication, I believe this can be done. For the sake of all of us, I believe it must be.

Mr. President, the other major aspect of this Special Session has been the effort to agree on a New International Development Strategy. We, like others, are therefore very pleased that agreement has been reached on this important document--a document which can serve as a benchmark for the efforts of the global community over the coming decade. Those who have laboured hard and long to achieve this success deserve our deep appreciation. Canada believes that the strategy can and should stand on its own merits. I appreciate that during the negotiations the section on official development assistance became the symbolic centrepiece of such