

preparing for the next, with the lead taken by the next host country. Also, on energy in particular, follow-up arrangements have been made to monitor progress in implementing the Venice commitments. A recent report on Western consultations by four private policy research institutes underlines the need for systematic preparation of the Economic Summits and suggests consideration of a small permanent secretariat. I am dubious about this idea; it could tend to "bureaucratise" Summits. Leaders will themselves, properly and understandably, want to keep on top of preparations for and follow-up to the Summit and keep these closely under their own personal control.

#### Importance of communiqués

I realize that communiqué-reading is something of a specialized, not to say arcane, art. Not everyone spends Friday evenings curled up with a good communiqué or two. But, read with due care for the nature of the source, the Summit communiqués of the past six years well reflect the evolution of informed thinking — the shift from relative optimism to a greater recognition of the intractable long-term nature of the economic problems, a greater acceptance in principle of the reality of interdependence and structural issues. Leaders' policy of consultation has been reaffirmed and strengthened, closer personal relationships have developed among the heads and a readiness has emerged to move towards collective action in some areas. In the process, these communiqués have served to educate the public and thus, perhaps, have had some effect on the expectations of participants in the economy.

The Economic Summits, in fact, have so far proven to be a positive and helpful addition to the Western world's instruments for managing international problems. They are not seen by the leaders as a *directoire*, nor could they be. The Summit countries must continue to work with their closest friends and partners: in the European Economic Community; in international organizations such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development and the International Energy Agency; and more broadly in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the International Monetary Fund, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development — in all organizations that are the policy organs for co-ordinated action. But Summits have brought key leaders together in a group that is large enough to have a significant voice in the world yet small enough to make real discussion possible. These gatherings have filled a void. To some extent they have in fact been able to overcome the weight of modern bureaucracies, though there remains a concern about institutionalization of the process, a fear expressed particularly at Venice that the communiqué-drafting threatened to take over the discussions. I believe, in short, that the world would have been worse off if there had been no Economic Summits.

#### North/South dialogue

The Summits — although political gatherings in the broad sense — have up to now focused largely on economic issues. These economic issues remain; indeed the economic prospects immediately ahead are at least as sombre as those before any earlier Summits. Moreover, the North/South dialogue will be with us in some form or other for many years to come. For this reason, at Venice, leaders asked their personal representatives to make a special study of aid and other contributions to developing countries, in order to facilitate a solid and substantive discussion of the subject at this year's Summit in Ottawa. In doing so, they were conscious of the factors of interdependence between developed and developing countries to which I alluded a few