

As we speak here tonight Canadian military and civilian personnel can be found in U.N. sponsored peacekeeping operations around the world. I expect that Canadian Forces' personnel will join the U.N. force that will soon go to Namibia as that country at long last becomes independent. We will surely be called on in the future to continue what we have done so effectively in the past.

Support for the United Nations has not always been automatic or easy. Just a few years ago the UN seemed to be in disarray if not in full retreat. It appeared unable to contribute to resolving regional disputes or to contribute to the resolution of the problem of excess armaments. It had failed to promote a North/South dialogue. Several areas of the U.N. family - notably UNESCO, the Food and Agriculture Organization and indeed the Secretariat generally - were becoming increasingly ineffective. A budgetary crisis loomed.

The problems in the UN at that time, not long ago, were stark: so too was the response of some countries stark. The UK and the U.S.A. withdrew from UNESCO. The American Congress, displeased by the UN's inefficiencies and by its perceived anti-Americanism, voted to hold back American payments to the UN. We too were unhappy and we too could have left but we did not, believing instead that reform from within was possible.

We have pursued our reform agenda on four tracks:

First, to address the UN's budgetary crisis, we devised a comprehensive set of budgetary systems and procedures to improve budgetary and financial practices that promise the UN greater financial stability and monetary effectiveness.

Second, through our membership in the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination we have pressed for the adoption of new priority-setting and decision-making processes.

Third, we are instrumental in having ECOSOC take on a full review of UN activity in the social and economic areas, a review designed to result in more simplified and rationalized operations.

Finally, we have taken the lead in the specialized agencies such as UNESCO and the FAO to improve programs, to control expenditures and to set new and effective direction to their activities.

One of the clichés about the United Nations is that, if it did not exist, we would have to create it. Let me suggest a variant to that cliché: If the present climate in world affairs didn't exist, the friends of the United Nations would want to create that climate. Because there are great opportunities now for the United Nations to prove its worth to skeptics, and opportunities to change permanently some of the national habits that have exacerbated conflict before.