

Economic and social affairs

Canada completed its three-year term on the Economic and Social Council in December 1977. However, as an observer Canada is still able to take an active role under new arrangements that allow observers many of the privileges of members. At the sixty-fifth session, Canada co-sponsored a resolution with the U.S. and was successful in obtaining agreement for a negotiating conference for an international treaty on illicit payments by transnational corporations.

At the thirty-third session of the UN General Assembly, Canada was elected a vice-chairman of the Second Committee. Under Canadian chairmanship, progress was made on a consensus resolution on the UN Conference on Science and Technology for Development, and the Committee established guidelines for the new International Development Strategy for the Third Development Decade.

Discussions continued at the thirty-third session on the reconstructing of the economic and social structures and machinery of the UN and on the mandate for the Committee of the Whole. Progress was made towards an improved climate for negotiations on outstanding issues relating to a "new international economic order" and for the exchange of views on global economic problems.

During 1978, Canada expressed some concern over the growing tendency of the United Nations to create "special years" to underline issues of particular concern to member states. Though Canada supports their general purpose, to increase awareness of the problems of specific "disadvantaged" sections of the world's population, the Canadian delegation has argued, in the General Assembly and other UN forums, that the proliferation of special years ultimately reduces their impact. Canada has maintained that if the international community were to restrict special years to no more than one every five years, the years designated would thus receive sufficient public attention to allow their message to be fully absorbed.

Preparations for the 1979 International Year of the Child were intensified throughout the world. The appeal of the General Assembly of the United Nations to focus on children's needs and rights has been responded to by 151 countries, while 121, including Canada, have established commissions to promote the observance of the year at the national level.

In July, Canada was host to the Inter-Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Sixth Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders, to be held in Sydney, Australia, in 1980. The Ottawa meeting brought together criminal justice experts from 20 countries to discuss crime trends, prevention and control. The conclusions arrived at during the Ottawa meeting will be forwarded for consideration to the Sixth Congress.