

Chapter 3

MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

The United Nations

The principal emphasis of Canadian policy towards the United Nations during 1984-85 was a strengthened commitment to promote the efficiency and effectiveness of the principle and practice of multilateralism. A firm supporter of the UN system of multilateral organizations since its inception, Canada reiterated and demonstrated throughout the year the intensity of its commitment. Barely a week after the change of government in September 1984, the new Secretary of State for External Affairs appeared before the UN General Assembly and made abundantly clear the continuity of Canadian commitment.

In his speech to the General Assembly on September 25, he quoted the Prime Minister as having said that the new government will play a more active role in the United Nations and its agencies, and added that Canada intended not only to maintain its traditional support of the UN system, but also to build on it consistently and pragmatically. Smaller and middle powers in particular, he said, need effective global institutions to help them respond together to the enormous political and economic problems of the century. He suggested that a broad coalition of "Friends of the UN" must join forces to renew the effectiveness of global institutions, and that his government would do its utmost to make these institutions flourish.

A highlight of Canada's commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the UN in 1985 was the state visit of Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar in March, during which he visited Toronto and Quebec City as well as Ottawa. In Ottawa, he was welcomed and entertained by the Governor General and the Prime Minister and was awarded an honorary degree by Carleton University. He also addressed a joint session of the Senate and the House of Commons. In this address, as in the others he gave during his visit, he focused attention on what he called the "crisis of multilateralism" and the need for concerted efforts to overcome it. In their responses, his Canadian hosts assured him of their support both for himself and for his endeavours to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of the UN system, and reaffirmed Canada's determination to contribute significantly towards the success of these endeavours.

Throughout the year, both before and after the United States' withdrawal from UNESCO at the end of 1984, Canada continued to be one of the most active participants in the efforts to reform UNESCO politically, administratively and financially, with the aim of restoring it to its proper place within the UN system as a viable and credible institution. The degree to which those efforts were successful was still unclear at year's end, but Canada was determined to continue to contribute to them from within the organization and to defer a decision about its future participation in UNESCO until the

next General Conference of member states, scheduled to be convened in Sofia in October and November 1985.

Elsewhere in the UN system — most notably in UNCTAD in Geneva, and in the principal food-related organizations, FAO and the World Food Program (WFP) in Rome — Canadian delegations promoted procedural and substantial reforms to enhance the effectiveness of these organizations and to encourage their improved integration within the UN system. In New York, Canada played a leading role both in the Preparatory Committee for the Fortieth Anniversary of the United Nations, and in a more informal group of like-minded member states (the "Friends of the UN", mentioned earlier), in seeking to define and have accepted practical reform measures which could improve the effectiveness of the General Assembly and thus strengthen the UN system. Noteworthy Canadian contributions were made to the efforts of both the United Nations and other UN bodies, such as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), to alleviate the crisis in Africa.

North-South co-operation

During the year, the main focus of North-South economic relations was on finance and trade issues. Within the Commonwealth and at the London Summit, Canada successfully promoted the idea of a special session of the IMF/IBRD Development Committee devoted to the financial problems of developing countries. The September 1984 annual meeting of the World Bank/IMF took the decision to hold such a special session of the Development Committee, together with a special session of the IMF Interim Committee, in the spring of 1985.

On the trade front, Canada repeatedly stated, in international forums and bilateral contacts, its desire to see the developing countries take an active part in a new round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations as the best means of promoting further trade liberalization in the interest of all countries.

Canada participated in the fourth general conference of the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), which achieved consensus on a variety of issues relevant to the industrialization of developing countries.

With the uncertainty of increases in the volume of aid in the near future, improvement in aid effectiveness and donor co-ordination has become particularly important. At the same time as achieving the interim target of 0.5 per cent of GNP for the level of Canadian aid in 1984-85 amounting to some \$2 billion, Canada played an active role in the UN Development Program (UNDP) and in the OECD Development Assistance Committee on improving aid quality. In particular, Canada gave strong support to the World Bank's efforts to enhance co-ordination.