

by contributing constructively to the world debate, and in practical terms by fostering active co-operation among our members.

I emphasise, though, that in this the Commonwealth cannot act in isolation, as though it were a bloc of like-minded nations. We are a sample of the world, at the service of the world. Last year, symbolising that reality, the Commonwealth Secretariat was granted observer status at the General Assembly of the United Nations, and it is always within the framework of the United Nations goals that our actions must be carried on.

I speak to you then with a measure of confidence about the destiny of the Commonwealth, and about its role and its utility in the world. But I emphasise that its utility is not so much as a unit in itself - certainly not as a self-contained unit - but as a factor contributing to the solutions that the world seeks, and that the Commonwealth's peoples, and their political leaders, seek too.

Here in Québec we could lay the groundwork for a widening of the base on which that work can be carried ahead, by exploring with you, as Francophones conscious of your own identity and your own dignity, ways in which we might join together in this work of construction of a better world.

That joint enterprise will be easier for us both if we forsake myths and enlarge realities - realities of ourselves and of the world around us. But, mostly, it would be assisted if we sharpen our perception of the interdependence of the human condition - acknowledging our need of each other and working steadily to strengthen all the elements that make for fraternity and to sublimate and suppress all those that keep, or force us, apart.

That perception of our contemporary reality, which has validity for the Commonwealth and la francophonie alike - validity both separately and collectively, was well conveyed by one of your own Canadian poets who I believe spent much of her youth here in this Province: by Margaret Atwood's haunting words that seem so apposite as, looking out onto a wintry landscape here in Québec, we conjure with the future:

"See, we are alone in
the dormant field, the snow
that cannot be eaten or captured

Here there are no armies
here there is no money

It is cold and getting colder

We need each others'
breathing, warmth, surviving
is the only war
we can afford, stay