

Mr. Speaker, six weeks ago UNESCO honoured one of our NGOs, The Canadian Organization for the Development of Education, which sends pencils, paper and books to the remotest areas of the world. I am pleased to point out that for many years this NGO has been supported by CIDA. I am equally pleased that there is a UNESCO to give recognition and encouragement to organizations like it.

Mr. Speaker, I have returned from Sofia with a determination to enhance cooperation between the Canadian International Development Agency and UNESCO, especially in small projects that cost virtually nothing but are a very valuable aid in development for the promotion of education, science and culture.

Mr. Speaker, in underscoring the special benefits which developing areas derive from their connection to UNESCO I in no way wish to underestimate the value to industrialized nation of this unique clearing house for ideas. UNESCO is important not only because it adds to the freer flow of information and ideas among peoples, but also because it contributes directly to the growth of knowledge during an era of increasing interdependence. UNESCO has a stabilizing influence on the world through this exchange. For example, through its publications, UNESCO is the largest publisher in the world, the values, aims, traditions of all societies are represented. Surely, this is an irreplaceable activity!

Mr. Speaker, as we all know, UNESCO has experienced some serious difficulties in recent years.

Canada has long maintained that 1985 is a make-or-break year for UNESCO, and that the 23rd General Conference of UNESCO is the most critical period within this time frame. The Conference has now ended, and what I wish to say to this House today is that the Government of Canada is pleased with the results. UNESCO has emerged with a renewed commitment to reform and with the image of an organization that knows what it means to accept responsibility.