

fields of endeavour. These include United Nations organizations, the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, and even farther-flung partners such as the European Community and the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe — all of whom might have meaningful experiences to share or might usefully benefit from our experience.

Moreover, we need not limit our partnerships to governmental or political organizations. Many other multilateral organizations have co-operative links with non-governmental organizations [NGOs]. NGOs with consultative status at the United Nations and the Council of Europe, for example, serve not only as a source of expertise and new ideas, but also as a mechanism for disseminating information on the organization in question to a broader public. Canada believes that NGOs could play a similarly useful role in the OAS, and for this reason we have requested that the Juridical and Political Committee give consideration, during the coming year, to the possibility of the OAS granting consultative status to NGOs.

Finally, I would like to emphasize the importance which I attach to the Summit of the Americas. I think we must thank President Clinton for inviting us all to Miami in December and for giving our heads of government this important opportunity to assess our common concerns and agree upon certain political and economic objectives as we move toward the 21st century.

Canada believes — as I think all of us here do — that the OAS must have a central role in the Summit. As the region's foremost political forum, it is essential that the OAS be engaged both in the setting of the Summit's agenda and in the implementation and follow-up of its recommendations.

On Sunday, I was very pleased to participate in the Informal Dialogue and put some of these ideas forward. Today, I would like to make a clear suggestion to you — that this Assembly direct the new Secretary General and the Assistant Secretary-General to make every effort to secure this type of involvement for the OAS.

I would also like to recommend that OAS members establish a preparatory committee at the ministerial level to discuss specific agenda items. Such a "prepcom" is important for several reasons: first, to ensure a key role for the OAS in the Summit; second, to ensure that the broad range of hemispheric concerns are taken into account; and third, to ensure that the views of some of the smaller states are heard on issues of importance to them.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, my delegation and I are looking forward to an active General Assembly here in Belém and to fruitful co-operation in working with all our partners toward our common