

# Chapter 3

## MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

The number, scope and membership of multilateral institutions has grown greatly since the end of the Second World War, and reflects in part the growing political, economic and social interdependence of nations. Canada's participation in many of these bodies complements its bilateral relationships, and supports the promotion of Canadian interests and the assertion of Canada's role as a member of the international community.

### The United Nations

The continued inability of the international community to resolve its many major disputes and conflicts of interest pointed up more than ever the need to strengthen the United Nations. This was the central theme of the Secretary of State for External Affairs' statement to the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly on September 27, 1983. He drew attention in particular to the necessity of progressing beyond high-sounding generalities to specific measures and to make more creative use of the existing provisions and mechanisms of the UN Charter. He cited as promising possibilities the more effective functioning of the Security Council and acceptance of the greater use by the Secretary-General of the authority vested in him by the Charter. These still remain promising but unfulfilled possibilities.

The minister's statement reflected in part Canada's sense of frustration over the inability of the Security Council to take appropriate action on the destruction of the Korean airliner on September 1, 1983. The majority of its members sought to condemn what had happened and to call for a full investigation of the tragedy by the Secretary-General, but the Soviet Union vetoed the resolution, of which Canada had been a co-sponsor. Fortunately, another body in the UN system, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), with its headquarters in Montreal, was not so constrained and did take effective action. On the initiative of Canada and the Republic of Korea, both the Council and the Assembly of ICAO considered this tragic incident expeditiously, with the result that an amendment to the Chicago Convention of 1944 which strengthened the existing legal prohibition of the use of force against civil aircraft was adopted.

Canada continued throughout the year not only to promote the potential for resolving the most difficult issues of peace and security of concern to the Security Council and the General Assembly, but also to encourage continuation of the less recognized and publicized achievements of the rest of the UN system. These included the valuable work being done in most of the UN Specialized Agencies, most notably perhaps in the International Labour Organization, the World Health Organization, the International Telecommunications Union, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Rome-based food agencies, and also in others. They included as well the con-

tinued slow but steady progress towards the eradication of violations of human rights, the development of international law and the promotion of greater social justice in areas concerning particularly the rights and status of women, children, youth and the elderly.

A major setback to the UN system in the year under review was the crisis precipitated by the US announcement of its intention to withdraw from the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at the end of 1984, unless major, much-needed political, administrative and budgetary reforms were instituted by that date. Canada agreed that a major effort at reform was required, but considered that this could best be achieved from within the organization. Canada won election to UNESCO's Executive Board and embarked, together with other like-minded countries, on the required effort. At year's end the reforms had not yet been achieved, but there were some promising signs of progress, and Canada's future attitude towards UNESCO will be determined by the results of the effort under way.

A healthier development in the UN system during the year was the continued improvement, largely under Canadian leadership, in the administration and financing of the UN Development Program (UNDP). Canada served as chairman of the UNDP Governing Council.

The continued Canadian commitment to the UN system was demonstrated by the visits to UN headquarters in New York not only of the Secretary of State for External Affairs but also of the Prime Minister, and the Ministers of External Relations, Agriculture, the Environment and Indian and Northern Affairs. The Minister of Agriculture was elected President of the World Food Council and other ministers addressed conferences of those Specialized Agencies with which their departments were primarily concerned.

### North-South co-operation

Although the economic crisis was beginning to abate in a number of developed countries, it continued to affect all the developing countries in varying degrees. In this difficult period for North-South dialogue, Canada tried to encourage common efforts to find pragmatic solutions.

It was in that spirit that Canada took part in the sixth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), held in Belgrade in June 1983. Although that Conference did not produce spectacular results, at least some progress was made, for example in the areas of basic products and the treatment of the least advanced countries. The tone of the debates was generally positive, and most of the resolutions were adopted by consensus.

In the UN context, Canada participated in the last round of consultations on the Global Negotiations and in the appraisal process for the Third Development Decade. During the