

of the United States and Mexico to work together to promote economic development in the Caribbean and the Central American region. For our part, this task is well in hand in the Commonwealth Caribbean, and we expect that our major emphasis will continue to be on these islands.

We may well not endorse all of the foreign policy imperatives of the American -- or indeed of the Mexican -- government, in promoting this initiative, but we can, I am confident, find common cause in the overriding need to develop the region and therefore find ways of reconciling our differing objectives. National motivations need not be identical for a common plan of action to be established.

For too long there has been a tendency to consider Latin America and the Caribbean as a single area, ignoring the fact that it is an area made up of 39 independent countries, dependent colonies and territories where the languages spoken are English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch, in which at least 20 have enjoyed political independence for over 150 years and all of which were at one time colonies of the great European colonial empires. Almost the only common thing about them is their colonial heritage and the fact that in many of them Spanish is the common language.

But these countries are no more like each other than are Australia and Canada. Each has its own history, its own racial mixtures, its own social development and its own economic status and potential. We must, therefore, deal with them individually.

Some will be important to us as export markets; others as sources of needed imports. Some will be sources of immigrants; others the destination of Canadian tourists. Some will be important because of their role in international affairs; others because of their need for development assistance to which we can contribute. Some will have shared political values. All have cultural traditions to which we can relate and in which we can share for the mutual benefit of our societies and our peoples.

Looked at in economic terms, these Latin states are all countries of the South. What is Canada's role in Latin America, or indeed in other parts of the world, in promoting the North-South dialogue? The government agrees with the Parliamentary Task Force on North-South Relations that Canada should base the development of Canadian policy on North-South issues on two major principles. First, the mutuality of interest of both North and South in solving global economic problems. Second, the humanitarian need to focus attention and resources on the world's poorest peoples and countries. These concepts will motivate Canada's aid programmes and govern our efforts in the search for compromise.