



United Nations

*Miss MacDonald speaks with UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim.*

sponsible and timely. The progress being made at this very moment in regard to Namibia and Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, for example, deserve our encouragement and support. It would be irresponsible to preempt the satisfactory resolution of these problems by precipitate and distracting debate in this, or any other forum, such as some member states might be inclined to use.

#### **The right to life**

A cornerstone of the United Nations is the second type of human right I want to discuss — the right of the people of the world to physical security. Born from the ashes of the Second World War, this organization is devoted to the peaceful resolution of differences between nations. To many people, this is the sole reason for the existence of this organization: to ensure the human right to live in peace.

Here too, our record gives little cause for satisfaction. Instances of aggression of one country against another continue. As always, righteous justification is claimed by each party to the conflict. There may be righteous warriors..., but there are no good wars. The people have entrusted to us the task of stopping this systematic destruction of the most fundamental of all human rights — the right to life itself. And yet, armed conflict remains a sorry characteristic of international affairs.

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Fortunately...there are reasons for hope. The first special session of this Assembly on disarmament was a success. For those who believe as I do, that

modern weapons are as much a threat as a protection to the security of nations, this was an encouraging step. Yet the record since that time is disappointing. The new machinery of negotiation in Geneva is blocked by rivalry and suspicion. The testing of nuclear weapons continues, despite the high priority that the special session gave to the ban. Preparations for chemical warfare continue: no agreement has been reached on measures to limit the use of weapons that cause unnecessary suffering and spending for military purposes grows ever larger.

Nevertheless, a hopeful sign of urgency remains. I cite the *communiqué* signed in Vienna last June by Presidents Carter and Brezhnev, in which they commit their governments "to take major steps to limit nuclear weapons with the objective of ultimately eliminating them, and to complete successfully other arms limitation and disarmament negotiations".

#### **Canada's keen concern**

Mr. President, Canada has a particular interest in the honouring of this commitment — we are the only country that is a neighbour to both the United States of America and the Soviet Union. As such we could not escape the devastation of a strategic nuclear war, hence our specific concern.

But there is another reason for our deep interest. Canada has been a pioneer in the development of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Our Candu power reactor is an outstanding success both in Canada and abroad. But we are deter-

mined that this technology not be misused. We demand that stringent safeguards be applied by countries buying Canadian nuclear power facilities or materials....

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#### **UN peace-seeking role**

Genuine international security is not merely a matter of agreements on arms control and disarmament. Before such agreements can be reached, and certainly before they can have effect, there must be a climate of trust, of decency, and justice among the nations of the world. Confidence must be built up by small steps between neighbours, between alliances, and between the nuclear powers. The United Nations must be allowed to expand its fact-finding and peace-seeking roles if such confidence is to grow. In areas where tensions are too high, concrete steps must be taken to prevent accidents or miscalculations....

The people of the world expect no less of us, and...the people are right.

Finally...as we examine the lessons of the past, and as we assess the challenges for the future, there is one striking fact that dominates all others — the singular failure of the international community to solve the problem of poverty....

Giving effect to this basic human right is the greatest task facing the United Nations for the remainder of this century. The overriding importance of this work is clear to all....

...Development assistance does not imply the foisting of one country's social and economic philosophy on another. The true meaning of co-operation is increasingly understood.

It is no answer to the problem to set up a sort of international social welfare system to give hand-outs to the poorest. Nothing could be more demeaning to human dignity, nor more guaranteed to perpetuate poverty. Our goal must be to enable people to use their own abilities, and to assist states to develop their own potential.

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#### **North/South dialogue**

...Of particular concern to me is the increasing note of pessimism that seems to be creeping into the North/South dialogue; the contention that nothing has changed for the better anywhere, and is unlikely to in the future; the spirit of

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