

anticipating our future needs for global government and the corresponding transformation of the United Nations to meet those needs.

Last September, Canada observed a sad contradiction at the opening of the General Assembly. We stated that the United Nations was becoming more necessary and less effective. The United Nations faced a major financial crisis and was beset by myriad economic, social and political problems which it seemed to have little chance of solving. The urgency of the financial crisis convinced Canada, along with many other countries, to concentrate first on cost cutting and the avoidance of bankruptcy. We were also very active in the search for consensus on the much needed reform package.

Has the situation changed? Eleven months later the United Nations continues to face serious financial difficulties, and is still beset by problems it is hard-pressed to handle. But change there has been.

Under the wise and capable leadership of the Assembly's President, His Excellency Mr H. R. Choudhury, Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, and with the advice of a number of high-level experts from different regions of our world, the General Assembly slowly pulled itself towards a consensus agreement on administrative and budgetary reform. This was not just agreement on how to reform. It represented a new step forward in multilateral cooperation because it was an agreement that reform was indeed necessary. It therefore represented an exercise of considerable political will for those many countries which were hesitant or fearful of how the proposed changes might affect the U.N. programmes they most valued.

Another major exercise aimed at organizational reform within the broader U.N. family was recently started in the context of ECOSOC. Canada hopes that this thorough examination of the U.N. structure will result in a strengthening of the system as a whole.

Canada played a leading role on U.N. reform last year, partly out of a perception that we have a clear need for a strong and workable multilateral system, and partly out of a genuine desire to see the United Nations fulfil its political, economic and social mandate.

Although the so-called crisis of multilateralism is not over, we have seen in action the political will which is needed to overcome it. Only the most pessimistic can now claim that the U.N. and its membership are incapable of responding to criticism and to the challenge of a crisis.