

mid-point the Heads of Government participate in a "retreat" away from the conference table. These traditions enable different viewpoints to be aired frankly and calmly, without the posturing and rigidity which tend to accompany public debate in other international fora.

Following a long series of Prime Ministers' conferences in London, Heads of Government Meetings of the Commonwealth have been held in: Singapore (1971), Ottawa, Canada (1973), Kingston, Jamaica (1975), London, Britain (1977), Lusaka, Zambia (1979), Melbourne, Australia (1981), New Delhi, India (1983), and Nassau, Bahamas (1985).

CONCLUSION

In the past 30 years, Canada's relations with Africa have extended to the full range of bilateral exchanges and consultations at the political, institutional and commercial levels. Each region and indeed each country has its special characteristics.

Notwithstanding the difficult economic circumstances in which several Sub-Saharan African countries have found themselves in recent years, extensive commercial relations have developed with several countries including the Maghreb, Egypt, Cameroun and Nigeria. In 1985, total Canadian exports to the continent were at \$1.4 billion and imports from Africa at \$1.1 billion for a total two-way trade of \$2.5 billion. Canadian companies are more and more involved in mutually beneficial exchanges with Africa and their expertise is being utilised to meet the African countries' needs in goods, services and transfer of technology.

Bilateral visits from African leaders to Canada or by Canadian leaders to Africa are numerous and they provide opportunities to review both bilateral and multilateral issues. In 1986, for example, there were two official visits by African Heads of State, that of President Sassou-Nguesso of Congo, who is also the current Chairman of the Organization of the African Unity (OAU) and that of President Biya of Cameroon. Both visits were particularly successful in reinforcing bilateral relations with these countries as well as with the OAU, the most important continental organization in Africa.

The visit of Prime Minister Mulroney will be another landmark in the ongoing relations between Canada and Africa.