



Statements and Speeches

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CANADA'S RELATIONS WITH THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT CO-ORDINATION CONFERENCE (SADCC)

Address by Senator Duff Roblin to the SADCC annual conference, Harare, Zimbabwe, January 30, 1986.

... Canada together with all of us here will be considering the project details and five-year plans that the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) has presented to this Conference. However, my main purpose at this moment is to affirm in a direct and concrete manner Canada's belief in the SADCC process. SADCC is to Canada one element of key importance by which the nine nations of this region grow and develop and achieve through mutual co-operation and self-help. One characteristic of the SADCC organization that I have noticed is that we do not often permit ourselves to deviate from the practical matters and economic business which make up our agenda. But who can ignore what dangerous times these are in southern Africa. South Africa is at the centre of world pressures: world pressures that are gradually being mobilized; pressures that are converging on South Africa so that there may be a new era in human relations in that country. And, of course, the SADCC nations are in the front line.

The Canadian government and people are part of that world pressure for peaceful change. We have taken our own national measures to this end. We have supported, especially, the recent Commonwealth accord in which Prime Minister Mugabe, along with other Commonwealth leaders in Africa, gave such wise counsel and leadership. We have not given up hope that the Commonwealth group of eminent persons, which was established at that time, may yet find an opening for reason and dialogue and communication with an heretofore intransigent South Africa. Furthermore, we are glad that a Canadian, Archbishop Edward Scott, is one of these eminent Commonwealth persons. However, while all this goes on, we are here. We are here on the ground. We continue to have work to do together. We continue to work together in order that the nine nations of this area may establish that essential economic basis for nation building which, together with practical and tangible co-operation, will ensure they continue to grow.

I cannot help at this moment but pay a tribute to the government and people of Zimbabwe who, in the SADCC process, have been assigned special leadership in the area of agriculture, for their remarkable and effective achievements, not only within their own country, but also for the agricultural leadership they have provided within the SADCC group itself.

Current activities in all areas are to be strengthened. New projects are to be conceived and new plans are to be laid. And, as economic power grows in SADCC, the region will be able to attain a political independence that will become more real and more sustainable. That is what SADCC is all about, it seems to me. It is not some magic cure-all, but it does some of the best work that is being done in southern Africa and Canada is proud to be one of the bilateral partners. The nine nations of SADCC control the master plans. Canada and the bilateral partners lend their aid and we are all together getting things done.
