

Mr Chairman, Mr Secretary General, distinguished Ministers and representatives, fellow Permanent Observers, ladies and gentlemen: it is an honour for me to address this Third Regular Session of the General Assembly of the OAS. A year has passed since Canada became a Permanent Observer to the OAS. That step was taken as part of the Canadian policy of intensifying relations with Latin American countries and the institutions of the inter-American family. It engages the interests not only of the Canadian Government but of many Canadian organizations and of individual Canadians at all levels.

2. In fulfilling Canada's declared undertaking to draw closer to Latin America, we have taken a number of other steps during the last year. Many of these are directly identified with the Inter-American community. Among the most important was our accession to full membership in the BID on May 3. By that step, Canada associated itself directly with the developmental aspirations of the countries of the Hemisphere. In concrete terms, it involved a Canadian commitment to contribute one hundred million dollars to the resources of the bank over the next three years. Canada is already playing a full and active role in the Bank's Board of Directors and there is keen interest in Canada in the Bank's operations and future plans.

3. On November 4 of last year, Canada became a member of the Inter-American Institute of Agriculture Sciences. We intend to play an active part in the work of the Institute which will enable us to share our experience in rural development with the countries of the hemisphere. We have also participated in some of the major inter-American meetings held under OAS auspices. These include the CACTAL meeting held in Brasilia last May, the Annual Meeting of CIECC in Argentina in December, and the recently concluded meeting of CIES in Bogota.

4. The activities of our mission to the OAS have brought Canada into close and continuous contact with persons of the organization at all levels. I wish now to pay tribute to the unfailing courtesy, helpfulness and interest that has been shown to us on all occasions by the Secretariat. We are also deeply grateful to the member delegates of the OAS who have never failed to make Canada feel welcome in their midst.

5. This Assembly's Agenda and the discussions at recent meetings have made it clear, that this is a time of transition for the OAS. We see the OAS engaged in a fundamental review and reassessment of its structures and activities, charting new paths for the future and considering how to involve non-member