

In fact, the Government has already moved beyond the exploratory stage. Following the initial studies of the Interdepartmental Committee on Economic Relations with Developing Countries, established at the end of 1974, we have defined a number of positions that, if they were found acceptable by other countries, would give substance to our new multidimensional approach to international development. I shall have more to say on this score tomorrow in New York, during my intervention at the seventh special session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The other pervasive theme of the new strategy -- flexibility -- is a necessary corollary of the first one; it is also a necessary response to recent changes in the world's economic structure. One of the paradoxes of our times is that, while developing countries have managed to achieve in recent years a much more effective degree of political solidarity within international institutions, the dynamics of the world economy have revealed, sometimes glaringly, significant material differences and discrepancies among them. Some developing countries are fantastically rich in natural resources; others are almost completely bereft of them. Some have a considerable agricultural potential or are surrounded with seas teeming with marine life, while the territory of others is land-locked or covers mostly arid lands. Climate, topography, culture, political traditions, literacy, public health, technology, initial capital, "resource mix" -- all these factors make the permutations of the developmental equation almost infinite. It follows that international development policies will have to be much more flexible in the future if they are to be more effective; and, hence, the intent of the new Canadian strategy is to ensure that each development program or project will be tailored to the specific needs of each recipient country.

Naturally, this flexibility will be exercised within a general framework -- one whose "parameters" will be more explicit, perhaps, than in the past. Thus there has never been much room, in the Canadian assistance program, for the "frills" of development, as evidenced by the considerable investments we have made in social infrastructure such as roads, hydro-electric or irrigation projects. Yet we have deemed it useful to restate our basic priorities: food production and rural development, energy, basic education and training, public health, demography, shelter -- in other words, the most crucial, and also the most intractable, problems of international development. Similarly, you are all aware that the world-wide economic difficulties of recent years have inflicted inordinate hardships upon precisely those countries least able to cope with them, so that our commitment to direct the bulk of our resources and expertise to the poorest countries should surprise no one and be supported by all. Again, to achieve greater flexibility as well as to