

Canada and the United Nations

SPEECH BY THE HONOURABLE PAUL MARTIN, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, TO THE NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON DECEMBER 8, 1964.

Mr. President:

May I begin by congratulating you on your election to preside over the deliberations of this Assembly? In electing you to this high office, the Assembly has given recognition, at one and the same time, to the distinguished services you have rendered to the United Nations, to the prominent part your country has played in the affairs of this organization, and to the growing stature of Africa in the world.

I would also wish to extend a welcome to the Delegations of Malawi, Zambia and Malta, who have joined our ranks for the first time. Their presence among us serves as a reminder of the transcendent political changes that have marked the first two decades of the existence of the United Nations. It also takes us yet another step closer to universality of membership, which was the great issue of our debates some ten years ago and which must remain our ultimate goal so long as any significant segment of the world's population remains unrepresented in this forum.

Your own country, Mr. President, and mine are associated with these three new countries in the Commonwealth. We regard the development of this association as an imaginative response to the political changes of which I have spoken. We believe that it provides a unique framework for constructive co-operation among peoples of different races, creeds and cultures. This co-operation rests on a partnership of equals, and it is designed for our common benefit. We have recognized that, if the Commonwealth association is to continue to be meaningful, we would have to meet the challenge of racial equality and non-discrimination which is central to our partnership. We have not sought to avoid this challenge but have met it firmly and unequivocally by pledging ourselves to work towards "a structure of society which offers equal opportunity and non-discrimination for all its people, irrespective of race, colour or creed".

We are now on the threshold of the twentieth anniversary year of the United Nations. On an occasion such as this it is fitting that we should look back on the record of our accomplishments and our failures. It is equally fitting that we should cast our glance forward into the future to survey the opportunities that are open to us and the means we must deploy towards their attainment.

The United Nations was born of disenchantment — disenchantment with an order of things which, twice in a single generation, had engulfed us in armed conflict with all the attendant destruction and human suffering. But the United Nations was also born of a determination to build a new and more rational world