

As a result of these activities, the Commonwealth has become increasingly respected as a constructive and dynamic international organization, supporting the ideals, principles and programs of the United Nations, to which it is accredited officially as an observer and with which it maintains continuous contact both at the United Nations headquarters itself and the various Specialized Agencies. As Secretary-General Ramphal said recently during a Commonwealth conference on commodity-trading problems, "the Commonwealth cannot negotiate for the world, but it can help the world negotiate". This is an apt description of the Commonwealth and its current work on such vital problems as the situation in southern Africa, the world economic situation and the aspirations of the developing world, development assistance and related problems.

#### Canada's role

Canada remains strongly attached to the Commonwealth, not only through historical, cultural and linguistic ties but also from our conviction that its ideals and policies are consistent with our own. Through it, we retain the best of our links with Britain, and at the same time the Commonwealth represents those qualities of independence, global representation, mutual respect and co-operation that we believe are essential ingredients for the solution of international problems.

Canada and Canadian prime ministers have played a major role in supporting and developing the "new Commonwealth". Prime Minister Trudeau has taken a keen interest in maintaining the informality and breadth of Commonwealth heads-of-government discussions; he played a leading role in formulating the Gleneagles Agreement against *apartheid* in sport. Canadians work in senior positions at the Secretariat; Canadian experts have been requested and have participated in the preparation of virtually all the major Commonwealth special studies that have formed the basis of political and economic action. Canada has encouraged the establishment of co-operation between the Commonwealth and La Francophonie. Canadian private citizens, Parliamentarians, officials and government departments are active year-round in Commonwealth conferences and programs. Last but not least, Canada has shown its support by being one of the largest financial contributors to Commonwealth budgets.

Support for the Commonwealth and the positive role it can play in world problems remains a basic tenet of Canadian foreign policy. There is no area of international concern that does not touch one or another Commonwealth member, directly or indirectly. The Commonwealth is uniquely able to bridge wide diversities between governments and peoples, North and South, rich and poor. We want to preserve its unique qualities, to encourage active participation in it by its members at all levels, and to enhance its role, including that of its nongovernmental organizations, as an instrument for greater co-operation in the world community.

May I close this article by welcoming our visitors to the Commonwealth Games and wishing them a very enjoyable stay in Canada. Sports, in a special way, seem to encourage genuine, unaffected human contact and friendly competition in the pursuit of excellence. At this time Canada stands as the proud host of this exciting exhibition of athletes. We hope our visitors will remember Canada and the Commonwealth Games of 1978 in that way.

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