

- The Specialized Conferences (technical affairs e.g. telecommunications);
- The Specialized Organizations and Entities: (e.g. health, agriculture, women, children, narcotics)

## II. WHY DID CANADA JOIN ?

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 Canada has been a permanent observer from 1972 - 1990. Our decision to become a full OAS member was part of the Long-Term Strategy for Latin America approved by Cabinet in October, 1989. The Strategy consisted of a wide range of specific measures to enable Canada to contribute to and benefit from the economic and political transformations in the Americas. Canada became the 33rd member on January 8, 1990, an action warmly welcomed by OAS members and interpreted by them as evidence of a new Canadian commitment to the Western Hemisphere. In Ottawa, the House of



Commons Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade urged that Canada be an "active, autonomous and effective member".

Several developments led to our decision to join the OAS. A wave of democratization had transformed the region's political climate offering improved prospects for the strengthening of human rights. Recognition had grown that the nations of all the Americas were exerting an increasing influence on global issues.

The advent of more open societies encouraged the undertaking of major economic reforms characterized by the privatization of state owned enterprises and the lowering of external trade barriers. These changes created new opportunities for