

PART A

Chapter 5: GLOBAL AND TRANSREGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

UNITED NATIONS

The year 1979 was one of intense activity for Canada in the United Nations. In addition to the thirty-fourth regular session of the General Assembly, the specialized agencies and organizations held a large number of important meetings in various parts of the world, including two in Canada.

The fifth ministerial session of the World Food Council was held in Ottawa from September 3 to 7. Canada announced at that meeting that it would contribute \$2 million to helping the developing countries formulate a food strategy; this was a significant initiative. In Montreal, also during September, UNITAR (an autonomous institution within the United Nations system, devoted to training and research) held a large conference on new and renewable energy sources; more than half of the United Nations member countries were represented at that conference of experts.

Canada's fourth term on the Security Council ended on December 31, 1978; nevertheless Canada followed the Council's activities closely during 1979, as these had ramifications in almost all spheres of international life. The Council's activities included efforts to obtain the release of the American hostages being held in Teheran, as well as consideration of the Cyprus issue and peace and security in Southern Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

The General Assembly also considered these problems, as well as the broad economic, social, humanitarian and legal issues, and of course the matter of arms control and disarmament. The debate on the Middle East made clear once again the differences of opinion between a certain number of member states; this despite the Camp David Accords which Canada supported as a positive step towards peaceful settlement of the conflict in accordance with the terms of Security Council Resolution 242 of 1967.

In the field of human rights, Canada continued as a leader. Canada's representative was elected Chairman of the session of the Commission on Human Rights. The Secretary of State for External Affairs devoted almost all of her speech before the General Assembly to the promotion and respect of human rights. Canada condemned the violations of human rights in Vietnam, Democratic Kampuchea and elsewhere. Canada's report on implementation of the provisions of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was presented to the Commission on Human Rights.

The refugee problem was a subject of major concern in 1979, for both the General Assembly and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Both gave special attention to the tragic exodus of the peoples of Indochina. Canada was a major participant in the search for humanitarian solutions to this problem.

With the admission of St. Lucia to the United Nations by the General Assembly, the number of member states now stands at 152.

Economic and Social Council

Canada has been an observer on the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since completing its three-year term in December 1977. However, Canada has been able to take an active role under new arrangements that allow observers many of the privileges of members, and it will seek re-election to the Council at the thirty-fifth session of the UN General Assembly.

Social affairs

Preparations have intensified for Canada's participation at the Sixth UN Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders to be held from August 25 to September 5, 1980 in Caracas, Venezuela. Regional consultation seminars have been organized by Canadian criminology associations. Representatives of the federal and provincial governments, members of interested non-governmental organizations and concerned citizens are collaborating in formulating suggestions for Canada's position at the Congress.

The celebration of the 1979 International Year of the Child (IYC) provided the impetus to focus public attention on Canadian children, their environment, their special needs and their future. Canada's statement at the Special Plenary Session of the UN General Assembly on IYC brought out not only the many positive aspects relative to the situation of Canadian children but also some of the shortcomings to which our society should address itself in the coming years. A report on follow-up measures to IYC at the international level was elaborated within the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to "consolidate and to build further on the results of the Year in order to achieve lastingly increased benefits for children".

Over the past years, Canada had consistently expressed its concern regarding the growing tendency of the United