

the establishment of Technical Aids and Systems for the Handicapped (TASH), a marketing agency in the voluntary sector under the auspices of the Canadian Rehabilitation Council for the Disabled. Its objective is to market, service, and encourage the Canadian manufacture of aids to the handicapped which are unavailable through other means.

If the status of disabled persons in Canada has improved during the past decade, it is largely due to the disabled themselves, who have taken on an increasingly important and decisive role on their own behalf. The voluntary sector has also expanded its role as a provider of services and continues to lobby governments at all levels to improve the quality and range of services.

In this connection, we wish to bring to your attention the fourteenth World Congress of Rehabilitation International to be held in Winnipeg, in my home province, Manitoba, next June 1980. Its theme is "Prevention and Integration — Priorities for the Eighties". Congress organizers hope that the results of the meeting, particularly the Charter for the Eighties that will be coming from the Congress, will prove useful to the United Nations in its development of long-term plans for the next decade. Some 6,000 leaders in the rehabilitation movement from around the world will be in attendance, including many who are at this meeting today. It is my Government's hope that it will be possible for all member states to be represented at the Conference.

In conclusion, then, let me report that the Government of Canada is in full agreement with the Draft Resolution proposal on this item. We are prepared, within the limits of our financial and human resources, to do everything possible to improve the lifestyle of the disabled in Canada and around the world. The proposed leadership role of the United Nations may be crucial for the eventual realization of this objective. It is important that the United Nations itself, as an organization, ensures that its own services and facilities recognize the importance of prevention and integration. The roles of member states are equally vital. To this end, an Organizing Committee for 1981 will be established early in 1980 to give overall direction to the Canadian program for the International Year. This Committee will bring together representatives from different sectors of the community, including organizations of disabled persons, service agencies, organized labour and the business community. Its main thrust will be to stimulate the participation of the voluntary and private sectors, as well as different levels of government. In this manner, it is hoped that Canadians in all walks of life will become involved in projects and activities related to the International Year of Disabled Persons.

We advocate the development of mechanisms for information-sharing between countries in order to accelerate the attainment of our desired goal — quality of life for all. I believe that with all the member states working together, the International Year of Disabled Persons, while it might not add years to their lives, will certainly add life to their years. After all, a more abundant life is what we are all seeking.