

"Any weaknesses that the Organization may have are weaknesses of the governments, reflecting their inability to act in coordination as a group. The strength of the Organization lies precisely in the joint action taken by member governments. Whether for better or worse the Organization is nothing more than an aspect of our behaviour as States and if it is not run well we can blame no one but ourselves".

This remains true today, for the OAS as for any other international institution. We all know that the OAS is not a perfect institution. However, for Canada imperfection is no reason to evade our responsibilities as a partner in this hemisphere, any more than the failings of the United Nations should prompt our withdrawal from that organization.

Indeed, it seems to me that the rejuvenation of the United Nations is cause for considerable optimism within the OAS. The new realism which has liberated the United Nations has resulted in a renaissance for that organization. Its members have discovered that the words of its Charter can be a valid guide for effective and pragmatic action. This same pragmatism can - and I believe will - result in a new era of relevance for the OAS.

We therefore applaud the efforts made by member countries to reform and revitalize this organization. We strongly support the position it has played in the Central American Peace Process and the monitoring of elections in Nicaragua, as well as the great efforts made in seeking a solution to the difficulties in Panama.

The success of international institutions is often found not in their ability to resolve the grand political issues of the day. Rather it resides in the many functional activities devoted to the resolution of particular problems. There may not form the stuff of headlines; but they do define the dimensions of success.

That is why we have been an active member of the Pan American Health Organization which has done so much to improve the health conditions in the region, especially with its program called "Health - a Bridge for Peace" in Central America.

We are also impressed by the useful work of the Inter-American Institute for Co-operation on Agriculture, of which Canada has been both a member and contributor.