

BRAZILIAN TRACTION AND SOME CANADIAN COMMERCIAL BANKS AND INSURANCE COMPANIES WERE ACTIVE IN THE REGION LONG BEFORE ANY CANADIAN DIPLOMATIC PRESENCE. BUT EQUALLY IMPORTANT, THERE HAS BEEN A SUBSTANTIAL FLOW OF PEOPLE - TYPICALLY BUSINESSMEN, MISSIONARIES AND TOURISTS FROM CANADA AND IMMIGRANTS, REFUGEES AND STUDENTS TO CANADA - WHICH HAS STRENGTHENED MUTUAL AWARENESS OVER THE YEARS.

IN RECENT DECADES WE HAVE WITNESSED THE INSERTION OF GOVERNMENTS, OR THE PUBLIC SECTOR, AS A VITAL ELEMENT IN THE RELATIONSHIP, COMPLEMENTING AND REINFORCING THE NATURAL FLOW OF PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS, GOODS AND SERVICES. CANADA HAS NEGOTIATED FRAMEWORK AGREEMENTS AND OTHER FORMAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH MANY COUNTRIES OF THE REGION AS THE BASIS FOR A CONSULTATIVE PROCESS TO GIVE DIRECTION AND IMPETUS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF BILATERAL RELATIONS, FOR THE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON A WIDE RANGE OF POLICY ISSUES AND FOR THE RESOLUTION OF PROBLEMS. THESE GOVERNMENTAL LINKAGES, WHICH DATE FROM THE LATE 1940'S WHEN CANADA FIRST ESTABLISHED DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE REGION, HAVE SERVED TO BROADEN AND DEEPEN CANADA'S DIALOGUE WITH, AND UNDERSTANDING OF, COUNTRIES IN THE HEMISPHERE. BUT WE ARE NOW WITNESSING A GEOPOLITICAL CHANGE IN THE REGION, WITH COUNTRIES CLEARLY SEEKING BROADER REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS. WE ARE VERY MUCH PART OF THIS PROCESS OF ENDEAVORING TO DETERMINE WHAT ROLES WE SHOULD PLAY. IN THIS CONTEXT, PERHAPS I MIGHT