

positions were maintained at the UN Commission on Human Rights meeting in Geneva in February 1988.

The Caribbean

Canada has traditionally maintained excellent relations with the countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean. Historical, cultural, political and economic links, as well as a shared commitment to common values have helped foster a special relationship between Canada and the nations of this region. Significant trade, banking and investment ties extend back to the last century. Almost a half million first- and second-generation West Indians reside in Canada, and the region is a favoured destination for Canadian tourists. Established formal channels include the Commonwealth, the Canada-Caribbean Heads of Government meetings, the Joint Technical and Economic Committee and regular bilateral contacts. Canada is well regarded in the region for the strength and integrity of its commitment to regional development without political conditions.

In the year under review the issue of drug trafficking and abuse emerged as a major mutual concern of Canada and the Caribbean. Efforts to improve regional co-operation in the fight against drug trafficking were given renewed emphasis with the convening of the Barbados Drug Enforcement Conference in March 1988. This important conference was attended by representatives from most Caribbean governments, and other interested parties, including Canada, the United States and Britain. The conference sought to promote increased collaboration and co-ordination in regional efforts to control the drug trade. The conference generated considerable political support throughout the Caribbean and follow-up meetings were planned.

The Commonwealth Caribbean is one of the few regions in the Third World where democratic traditions and the rule of law are firmly entrenched, and political stability is predominant in the region. In February 1988 Canada welcomed the tentative return to democracy in Suriname, in the first free elections in that country in over a decade.

While the economic picture in the area improved modestly over the previous year, difficulties including commodity prices persisted in many states in the region. International indebtedness was also a continuing concern for many Caribbean nations, most notably Guyana which faces severe economic problems as a result. Unemployment remains a serious regional problem, with rates in some countries exceeding 20 per cent.

CARIBCAN continued in 1987/88 to play an important role in improving market access for Commonwealth Caribbean countries to Canada. The program is now under review following the negotiation of the initial two-year operating period. Canadian exports to the Commonwealth Caribbean amounted to \$292.8 million in 1987/88, comprising mainly telecommunications equipment, wheat, fish products and containerboard. Imports by Canada from the Commonwealth Caribbean totalled \$260.8 million and included alumina, fuel oil and petroleum and petrochemical products. Nearly 500 000 Canadians took vacations in the area, bringing tourist income of approximately \$400 million. Canadian investment in the region is currently estimated to be \$450 million, with Canadian firms and individuals involved in such sectors as banking, tourism, real estate, resource processing and light manufacturing.

A number of high-level visits were made during the year, notably the official visit of the Governor General to Barbados in November, that of Health Minister Jake Epp

Table 14
CANADIAN TRADE WITH SOUTH AMERICA
(thousands of dollars)

	EXPORTS		IMPORTS	
	Percentage increase from 1986	1987	Percentage increase from 1986	1987
Argentina	60.9	96 574	27.8	111 550
Bolivia	-49.7	4 487	-61.2	3 719
Brazil	-2.2	639 615	3.4	850 053
Chile	14.2	98 596	20.2	153 142
Colombia	40.9	224 330	7.1	132 878
Costa Rica	-47.8	41 345	4.1	96 045
Ecuador	-95.7	139	-86.1	9
French Guiana	14.2	5 162	31.8	35 490
Guyana	67.9	4 008	-88.8	808
Paraguay	7.2	118 962	14.4	75 224
Peru	-23.3	1 004	113.2	3 551
Suriname	99.6	25 256	776.0	130 198
Uruguay	2.0	329 840	6.8	551 238
Venezuela				
TOTAL	14.2	5 162 000	13.1	2 144 094