

Regional Initiatives: Withdrawal from Agencies

QUESTION

How can Canada reconcile withdrawal from two key institutions in the Inter-american system with its professed commitment to the hemisphere?

SUGGESTED REPLY

- Canada withdrew from the Pan-American Institute for Geography and History (PAIGH) on Jan. 1, 1998 and will leave the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA) by Jan 1, 1999.
- As a result of the government-wide reduction in expenditures during the past four years, Canada has faced some very difficult choices in allocating scarce resources in a number of international organizations. Tough decisions based on the relative value of memberships had to be taken and regrettably, IICA and PAIGH became two of the casualties.
- We have provided both organizations with sufficient advance notice so that they are able to adjust to the new situation.
- Withdrawal from membership in these two organizations should not be interpreted as a weakened commitment to the Hemisphere. The Americas are a priority area in our foreign policy.
- Canada will host the Pan American Games in 1999 and the OAS GA in 2000. We have taken a leadership role in efforts to create an FTAA by the year 2005.
- Canada continues to be the second largest financial contributor to the OAS, as well as an active member of other major organizations in the Inter-American system, such as the Inter-American Development Bank and the Pan American Health Organization.
- Canada participates in all facets of the Summit of the Americas process, including the proposed FTAA and preparations for the next Summit of the Americas in 1998.