



CANADA

CANADIAN WEEKLY BULLETIN

INFORMATION DIVISION • DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS • OTTAWA, CANADA

Vol. 22 No. 21

May 24, 1967

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THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The following extracts are from an address read on May 3 to the Kiwanis Club of Ottawa by Mr. Donald S. Macdonald, Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Martin:

...Canada was, of course, a founding member of the United Nations in 1945. We are convinced that the United Nations, representing the ideal of collective international action, is an essential tool in building a peaceful and more secure world, free from the threat of violence and war. Canada has, therefore, been a firm supporter of the United Nations from the beginning.

One of the most serious and searching challenges facing the international community today is widespread hunger and poverty, particularly in the continents of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This problem concerns not only the less-developed countries; it concerns the entire world. The United Nations, embracing nearly all the countries of the world and founded on the ideal of international co-operation to achieve common goals, must help to stimulate the international effort required to overcome world hunger and poverty through development....

During the first years of the United Nations, the most pressing concern of member states was, quite naturally, the prevention of another war. Peace and security provisions were carefully spelled out in the Charter, but the passages relating to economic development were less clear. Nevertheless, the foundations were laid for an active United Nations role in economic development, to achieve the conditions necessary for peace....

As more and more countries gained independence and became members of the United Nations, the organization underwent a fundamental change. The leaders of the newly-independent member states looked to the United Nations for assistance in achieving economic development, to make their political independence more stable and meaningful. The United Nations has responded by undertaking responsibilities in the development field, to a degree quite unforeseen when the Charter was drafted.

The magnitude of the United Nations commitment to international development at the present time is revealed by a single statistic: four-fifths of the financial and manpower resources available to the United Nations system are now being applied to development questions.

VOICE OF WORLD POVERTY

The extent to which the United Nations would be called on to concern itself with international economic development only became fully apparent in 1964, with the holding of the first United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, now known everywhere as UNCTAD. At that Conference, 77 member states of the United Nations, well over half the total membership, were united by their common poverty in putting the world on notice that a greater international effort to achieve development was required.

Although the organization established at the first UNCTAD has been in operation for less than three years, it has already proved of major value in