



Bulletin

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COLOMBO PLAN CONFERENCE

The following passage is part of an address by Mr. Mitchell Sharp, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the twentieth session of the Colombo Plan Conference, which was held in Victoria, British Columbia, from October 14 to 31:

...I think we are seeing in these successive conferences more than a growing partnership, — we are seeing the building of a true community, the development community. The meetings here are not primarily encounters between givers and receivers, between lenders and borrowers. This is a conference of interested ministers and professional experts in the development field, meeting to further shared aims. The growth of a development community is perhaps rather more than a fringe benefit of the Colombo Plan. It is an indication of maturity, of the realization that international development is just as important to the developed nations as it is to the developing nations.

This last idea is one that all of us in this room have grasped. I think it is one that the development community must make known, steadily and thoughtfully, to the peoples of all the countries associated in the Plan. This is important in the developed countries, where taxes must provide the necessary resources. It is important in the developing countries, where priorities have to be established, and accepted by the people at large. Above all, it is important that peoples in all the countries concerned outgrow the notion that development funds are organized charity on a government scale. International development, which must and will succeed in its task, is in the interest of all. It can release the massive reservoir of human resource in South and Southeast Asia

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now devoted to maintaining, in too many cases, bare subsistence and put it to work for the betterment of the conditions of life for us all.

I think, too, that this Conference continues to go from strength to strength because it has refused to institutionalize itself and so has avoided that hardening of the arteries that betrays a moribund condition. It is heartening to learn from the report of the Business and Economic Review Committee that the annual conference can be shortened by one week, the ministerial meeting limited to three days and other measures taken to ensure that the work of the Conference is carried out economically and effectively. You may have heard that, in my speech on behalf of Canada at the current General Assembly, I urged this kind of self-examination upon the United Nations. Some of you may know too that the Canadian Government is now engaged in an intensive effort to streamline its own operations.

POLICY REVIEW

The Canadian International Development Agency has been going through a significant period of transformation during the past three years to enable it to deal more effectively with an expanded Canadian role in international development. We have geared ourselves to enter into a more active co-operative relation with our development partners so that we can be more sensitive and responsive to their priorities and needs.

It is fitting that the Colombo Plan Conference is being held in Canada this year. Just as the Confer-