

The international community, particularly the western nations, have also realized their own responsibility to provide swift and massive emergency assistance on a scale hitherto unimaginable. Clearly, both Africa and the international community are now looking beyond the immediate crisis to a sustained collaborative effort, the success of which will allow Africa, including all of its countries, communities and peoples to develop. Amidst the ruin of the human experience there lies a potential triumph of the human spirit.

It would seem odd to make this speech without addressing the question of the proposed Special Session of the General Assembly on the African Emergency.

Canada happily supports the proposal. It is our hope that the debate, whenever it comes, will address the two overriding central issues: cushioning the impact of any present or future emergency; and consolidating the long-term strategy for the continent.

The special session in its time, and in its particular way, will then be re-enforcing and encompassing the many initiatives and policies already embraced or in process right across the United Nations system. After all, we have an excellent tentative blueprint in place: The Declaration on the Economic Crisis in Africa.

We look for concrete, practical results which can be supported by all, and which will be of permanent, incontestable benefit to Africa.

I have one final thing to say, because it is irresistible that it be said.

I well remember, with others, that historic meeting in a committee room downstairs on December 17, 1984, when the Office of Emergency Operations for Africa was launched. I well remember the pervasive gloom but stoic determination of those who graced the dais on that occasion — the Secretary-General himself, Mr. Stern of the World Bank, Mr. Souma of the Food and Agriculture Organization, and of course Bradford Morse, in whose hands the looming massive operation was placed. I well remember the comments of my colleagues; apprehensive, pessimistic, bewildered, frantic. I well remember a host of subsequent meetings in 1985, chaired by Mr. Morse with Mr. Strong at his right arm, where member countries, particularly donor countries including Canada, fretted and cavilled and stewed over money, staff complements, duplication, co-ordination, delivery, and the thousand other unnerving minutiae which sapped confidence and raised legitimate anxieties.

But above all I well remember, and observe with exhilaration, that the Office of Emergency Operations refused to be traumatized, buckled down to the job and performed magnificently.

This last year has surely been one of the UN's finest hours. The Secretary-General exercised his mandate with inspiration, focus and clarity. The international community was galvanized. And that little Brad Morse operation, acting in the name of us all, collaborating with donor countries, recipient countries, NGOs, and all the other relevant UN agencies; co-ordinating on the ground the distribution of the aid; overcoming what seemed to be in so many cases insuperable logistical difficulties — that Office

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