

During the Commonwealth heads-of-government meeting in London, a ministerial committee on Belize was established, made up of eight Commonwealth members, including Canada, Barbados, Jamaica and Guyana. The first meeting took place in September. Canada, with several other nations, cosponsored a resolution on the independence and territorial integrity of Belize at the thirty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly, which was adopted by a large majority.

Economic developments

The past year saw little moderation of the serious economic difficulties encountered by countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean. Balance-of-payments deficits and unemployment continued to plague most states, as did low prices for main export products. Recognizing the serious economic and developmental problems of the region, the World Bank called a conference on economic development in the Caribbean. The organizational meeting was held in Washington in December, with participation by recipient countries and donors like Canada with substantial interests in the region. Consensus was reached that a formal consultative group would be established to provide a framework for the periodic review and co-ordination of activities directed towards accelerating economic development in the region.

The Commonwealth Caribbean continued to be an area of concentration for CIDA's development-assistance programs. The Canadian International Development Agency and recipient governments agreed that generation of productive employment opportunities should be the prime focus of the programs. The emphasis on infrastructural projects was changed to concentrate on forestry, fisheries and agriculture. Canada continued its participation in the Caribbean Development Bank and supported such institutions as the University of the West Indies, Leeward Islands Air Transport (LIAT) and the West Indies Shipping Company (WISCO).

Negotiations between Canada and the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) states to develop a trade and economic agreement continued. It would replace the 1912 and 1925 West Indies Agreement and the 1966 Protocol, which is no longer a suitable instrument to govern Canadian-Caribbean trade in view of CARICOM's adherence to the Lomé Convention.

The Commonwealth Caribbean countries continued to pursue regional economic co-operation through such institutions as the Caribbean Development Bank and CARICOM. Certain strains developed within the latter institution as a result of import controls imposed by several regional members in their attempts to resolve their balance-of-payments difficulties and their shortage of foreign exchange.