

Latin America has made tremendous strides in recent years. Democracy is now the rule rather than the exception. Equally, governments - including particularly the Government of Mexico - have taken brave steps to open their economies and recover from the legacy of the past.

The courage of your government in addressing the many challenges before it is admired by Canada and we encourage you to stay your current course. Canadian banks have demonstrated a renewed confidence in the Mexican economy. And the Canadian government has the greatest faith in your future.

I have spoken of the great strides being made towards democracy and economic development throughout Latin America. However, democracy is a fragile flower and must grow firm roots. We must work together to ensure that our current hopes do not become future disappointments.

Latin America bears its share of the problems which together constitute a new type of threat to global security. I speak here of the debt crisis, the decimation of the environment, the scourge of drugs, and the suffering which accompanies senseless regional conflicts.

These problems cannot be addressed by national effort alone. The problems are international in scope. Their solutions must also be international in nature.

And they require unprecedented co-operation between the developed and developing world in seeking creative solutions. These are problems which do not know borders. They are problems which afflict the security of the developed world as much as they do the developing world.

I have been heartened by the new pragmatism and realism shown by many countries in approaching this panoply of problems. Nations in the North as well as in the South seem to have accepted that ideology is no recipe for success and the ascription of blame is no basis for progress.

Mr. Secretary, the discussions we have had today - and which will continue tomorrow - are an example of the reasoned dialogue which is necessary and possible between two countries which are aware of the severity of the problems at hand and have accepted their responsibility to seek practical solutions.

Recognizing the great promise and challenges which lie ahead for this hemisphere, Canada has joined the Organization of American States. This institution - with all its faults - is the singular instrument for cooperative action involving all countries in the region. For Canada, the well-known shortcomings of the OAS were not a reason to stay outside. They were reasons to become involved, to explore with others the possibilities of improvement, to take an active role in making the OAS work.