

Assembly in December 1993, and our success earlier this year in securing agreement by the UN Commission on Human Rights to appoint a Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women.

We were therefore pleased to see the Inter-American Commission of Women take up this important theme and have been very supportive of the efforts which have led to the Draft Convention before us at this General Assembly. That being said, I must note that Canada would have preferred additional consideration of this precedent-setting instrument in order to refine and clarify its provisions even further so that, in the end, it could be held up to all the world as an unassailable model of excellence.

My government is intent, as well, on increasing our trade and investment links with the region. NAFTA [the North American Free Trade Agreement] is an example of the fruitful co-operation which can be achieved in this area, and we are encouraging other countries of the region to consider taking the steps which will allow for their eventual accession to NAFTA. Canada is also encouraged by the transformation of the former CECOM — which had basically become a narrow forum for airing trade complaints — into the new Special Committee on Trade. This committee will have a broader, more forward-looking agenda and will promote dialogue and co-operation on a wide range of trade policy issues. Canada believes that, backed by solid technical analysis, the Special Committee on Trade will be able to play an effective role in fostering regional trade and economic integration.

Finally, building a framework for co-operative security in the hemisphere remains a key goal for Canada. The OAS has moved ahead steadily in providing a forum for consultation, dialogue and practical co-operation in a number of important areas including non-proliferation, conventional arms transfers, conflict prevention and confidence- and security-building. The Buenos Aires seminar on confidence- and security-building measures, jointly sponsored by Canada/Argentina and the OAS, was an excellent example of what we can accomplish in this area.

We believe that our work can be further intensified in the coming year. Canada would welcome the evolution of the Special Committee into a Permanent Committee of the OAS. We would like to see smaller working groups established within the Committee to look at specific areas of interest, such as conventional arms transfers. Moreover, we look forward to sending our experts — civilian and military — to participate in specialized meetings, such as a Regional Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures which the Government of Chile has offered to host.

In addition, Canada is looking forward to participating actively, during the coming year, in a review of existing hemispheric security institutions, including the Inter-American Defence