

Conclusion

This brings me to what you and we should be doing together. The easy answer is more of the same. In fact, I think we must do more and do it better. In doing so, I think there are two principles we should keep firmly in mind. The first is that politicians and bureaucrats cannot do the real business. The private sector must remain the senior partner in the development of bilateral trade and economic relations. The second is that government does have a role. Our efforts are intended to support and facilitate; they are, of course, not limited to circumstances where constraints on market access or broader political considerations justify a formal government role; they should furthermore be sufficiently flexible to take account of changing circumstances.

To do so effectively, we must have the best possible understanding of what will be helpful — from door-opening to treaty-writing. Hence the need for frequent consultations. We have found the consultations carried out over the past year with the Canadian Business and Industry International Advisory Council, of which you are members, to be extremely useful. I recognize that it is not always easy for you and the other member organizations of CBIAC to speak to us with one voice, but I encourage you to continue your efforts in this regard.

We are trying to consult more often. We are trying to consult more on specific subjects. In recent months, agenda items for our meetings with CBIAC have included environmental-protection legislation, fair labour practices and commodity negotiations. We are also trying to consult more before policies are set by government.

It is particularly helpful when the business community is able to produce proposals and recommendations on specific subjects. A case in point is the Report on Extortion and Bribery in Business Transactions, adopted by the Council of the International Chamber of Commerce in November 1977. In that report, the ICC recommended that a treaty be drawn up to combat corrupt practices in international business transactions, and also outlined specific rules of conduct for business enterprises. This positive approach by the business community has provided an impetus to the efforts currently under way to draft an international agreement, and has also helped focus those efforts.

This is the kind of pragmatic approach demanded of us by our changing world. It not only pays dividends to you, it makes our job easier and permits us to be more effective. And that, I think, brings me back to where I came in. The world is no longer a simple place, if ever it was, and the need for mutual reinforcement is greater than ever. There are certain political realities to which we must respond; you are judged by the figure on the bottom line of your balance-sheet. Government has to take into account the factors that determine your bottom-line figure, and we wish to do so. By the same token, the business community must respond to the political and economic realities we face, and I am sure you wish to do so. I am optimistic by nature. I am confident that our continuing dialogue will prove invaluable.