

independence for over 150 years and all of which were at one time colonies of the great European colonial empires. Almost the only common thing about them is their colonial heritage and the fact that in many of them Spanish is the common language.

But these countries are no more like each other than are Australia and Canada. Each has its own history, its own racial mixtures, its own social development and its own economic status and potential. We must, therefore, deal with them individually.

Some will be important to us as export markets; others as sources of needed imports. Some will be sources of immigrants; others the destination of Canadian tourists. Some will be important because of their role in international affairs; others because of their need for development assistance to which we can contribute. Some will have shared political values. All have cultural traditions to which we can relate and in which we can share for the mutual benefit of our societies and our peoples.

Looked at in economic terms, these Latin states are all countries of the South. What is Canada's role in Latin America, or indeed in other parts of the world, in promoting the North/South dialogue? The government agrees with the Parliamentary Task Force on North/South Relations that Canada should base the development of Canadian policy on North/South issues on two major principles. First, the mutuality of interest of both North and South in solving global economic problems. Second, the humanitarian need to focus attention and resources on the world's poorest peoples and countries. These concepts will motivate Canada's aid programs and govern our efforts in the search for compromise.

Neither countries of the North nor those of the South constitute homogeneous groups. In spite of their diversity, the South countries draw their feeling of unity from the convictions they share and from a common perception of their position in the world. Among other things, they are convinced that the international economic system has been overly favourable to the rich countries, and that is why they are asking that the rules of the game be changed. They want the system to be more accommodating for them. The poorest among them entertain more limited ambitions: they only want to survive, to improve their lot to a certain extent, and to keep their societies intact, and that regardless of forces and situations over which they often have no control whatsoever.

We should not wonder if developing countries seek to use existing international institutions to achieve their aims. New industrialized countries, such as Brazil, are ever more active within the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Canada itself contributed to set up postwar international institutions because it looked upon them as a means of reducing its own vulnerability and opening new avenues for international co-operation.

Unfortunately, the poorest countries are the ones which will probably benefit the least from any change in the institutions or in the exchange and payment system which might result from the North/South negotiations. It is towards those poorest countries — Haiti, Honduras and Guyana — that Canada will continue to direct its bilateral aid. In fact, our bilateral public aid to development has always been con-

Canada and the  
North/South  
dialogue

Priority  
sectors