

These efforts complement the vigorous pursuit of our economic relations. We will also continue to encourage and support cultural exchanges because, as nations, we can best cooperate when our peoples have a better understanding of each others' character and unique forms of expression. We will also maintain -- and hopefully increase -- an active program of development assistance to the extent that our resources allow.

Another important aspect of our policy of reaching out to the hemisphere is our increasing involvement in the Inter-American system. Canada is a member of several regional organizations such as the Pan-American Health Organization, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture, and the Inter-American Conference on Telecommunications. Canada contributes some \$8 million annually to these various inter-American institutions -- not counting our substantial subscriptions to the Inter-American Development Bank and the Caribbean Development Bank. Through these and other specialized agencies and bodies, we cooperate actively in promoting social, economic and technical cooperation in the Americas.

The Government at present is considering whether Canada should go beyond its current status of Permanent Observer at the Organization of American States and seek full membership. I do not intend to prejudge tonight the