

transformation of the Special Committee on Hemispheric Security into a Permanent Committee. The many valuable initiatives that have been undertaken over the past several years in the area of confidence-building measures, arms control registers, and anti-personnel landmines, to name but a few, have proven that security issues are an important and integral part of the overall OAS agenda.

In the area of confidence-building measures, Canada has been an active participant and looks forward to the upcoming conference in Chile as a constructive means of continuing this dialogue.

An issue that has not yet received the attention it deserves, in Canada's opinion, is the review of the Inter-American Defence Board. As I mentioned earlier, one of the components of democracy is civilian oversight of the military. This should apply at the OAS as well. If the OAS is to continue devoting scarce resources to the Inter-American Defence Board, there must be a well-defined mandate, the allocation of an appropriate budget, and clear accountability to the OAS. This makes sense in terms of not only political control, but also fiscal responsibility.

The promotion of prosperity and employment is at the heart of every government's, and indeed every region's, agenda. Canada is no exception, and as a trading nation, has made it a central foreign policy concern. Hemispheric leaders agreed at the Summit of the Americas to work toward hemispheric free trade by the year 2005, and gave the OAS's Special Committee on Trade a key role to play in supporting this objective. Canada endorses this involvement by the OAS in the area of economic integration, and in particular the creation of a Trade Unit to provide research and policy support.

Assisting countries to increase their level of development and prosperity has been a long-standing component of OAS activity and of Canada's relations with the region. The OAS took a major step in this area with the Protocol of Managua and the Partnership for Development concept, both aimed at streamlining and providing greater focus to the OAS technical co-operation program. Canada is concerned at the lack of progress made in this area and believes that new energy is needed. We would urge countries that have not yet done so to ratify the Protocol of Managua. Moreover, Canada believes it is essential to take steps to rationalize the activities of the various committees and working groups involved in this area, and thereby move the agenda along. We appeal to other member states to join with us at this General Assembly in supporting this important reform effort.

Protection of the environment and sustainable development are crucial issues for Canadians, and Canada has been an active participant in the Environment Committee's efforts to help