



Statements and Speeches

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BEYOND CANCUN: CANADIAN PERSPECTIVES ON THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE

An Address by the Honourable Mark MacGuigan, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the Society for International Development, Baltimore, July 21, 1982

The Society for International Development (SID) has a distinguished history. The frank and informal exchanges it has fostered among such a diverse group of people have made an important contribution to international development. Such exchanges are increasingly vital in the current global context. They can lead to increased understanding and the generation of fresh and innovative ideas which can I hope attract the support of the international community as a whole. Our discussions can also stimulate real public involvement in each of our own countries and perhaps be an even more significant catalyst for international co-operation.

Certainly these efforts are deserving of our full support. Canada has, therefore, placed importance on its contributions to SID activities and, in the current year, will be providing close to \$150 000.

I do not intend to rehearse today the lengthy litany of world economic problems. Nor do I wish to dwell upon the gravity of the current economic situation. It is, unfortunately, all too evident to everyone here. Rather, I would like to focus on a Canadian perspective of the North-South dialogue, the role we seek to play and why, and finally where we can go from here, nine months after Cancun. I propose to begin by outlining the underlying principles that guide Canada's approach to North-South issues.

Broad view of
national self-
interest

Speaking as the foreign minister of my country, I have no hesitation in saying that Canada's national self-interest is the major determinant of our foreign policy. We are involved in the North-South dialogue, and will continue to be so, precisely because we believe it is important for our self-interest. In my view, however, national self-interest cannot be defined narrowly and parochially. It must be viewed both broadly and over the long term.

Canada is faced with some inescapable realities. Geography has given us as our immediate neighbour, the most powerful nation in the world. It has been said that when the United States catches a cold, Canada contracts pneumonia. Having only one-tenth the population of the United States, Canada has therefore tended to look to universally agreed upon "rules of the game" to help put us on a more equal footing when conflicts of interest occur.
