

UNITED NATIONS AFFAIRS

The *Bureau of United Nations Affairs*, which consists of two divisions, *United Nations Economic and Social Affairs* and *United Nations Political and Institutional Affairs*, provides advice on and co-ordinates the implementation of Canadian policy towards the United Nations and the related "family" of Specialized Agencies and other bodies. A major function of the Bureau and its divisions is to assist in the appointment, briefing and co-ordination of the work of Canadian delegates who participate from time to time in nearly all of these bodies that offer an opportunity to advance Canadian policy objectives. In addition to its major co-ordinating responsibility, the Bureau has a variety of operational responsibilities and serves as the headquarters link with the Permanent Missions in Geneva and New York, as well as with other Canadian missions in respect of the UN tasks they discharge.

Despite its seeming weaknesses and handicaps, the United Nations system remains the most ambitious experiment yet made by the international community of states to reconcile the political, economic, social and cultural differences that have so often prevented nations from working together constructively for common ends. It continues to be an accurate reflection of a highly imperfect world in which the wide variety of the conflicting views about what is desirable and about how to pursue legitimate aims has made the business of "harmonizing the actions" of nations so conspicuously difficult. In his address to the twenty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly on September 29, 1971, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, emphasized four problem areas that involved the world community. The first of these was armed conflict. Since, as he observed, the world was not yet ready for a supra-national authority, the community of nations must continue to make the best use of the United Nations to solve purely international conflicts and those conflicts of international proportions that had grown from the internal problems of the sovereign states. The second major problem area, and one in which Canada had special interest, was that of the physical environment and questions relating to it. Canada had been working toward the development of an adequate body of international law relating to the preservation of the environment in general, and to the marine environment in particular. It had supported and was working for successful deliberations at the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment in 1972. The Minister urged all United Nations members, and the developing nations in particular, to take advantage of advances in technology in order to achieve their economic and social development without disturbing the balance of nature. On arms control and disarmament, which constituted another international problem area, there was urgent need for a determined and speedy effort to reach a total ban on underground nuclear testing. The major nuclear powers were encouraged to decrease the number and scope of nuclear tests and to give the highest priority to making the Non-Proliferation Treaty viable. The fourth problem area, that of world trade, was of significance for all, since every country had an interest in minimizing obstacles to trade and in facilitating it by the maintenance of a workable system of monetary exchanges. Much of the best work of the United Nations had been directed toward the creation of a world economy that would support all the