

but it also makes us dependent on the stability and dynamism of our foreign markets. Politically we have democratic institutions, one requirement of which is to meet the aspirations of a population whose interests, for geographical and cultural reasons, are very diversified. Among these aspirations is the desire of Canada's Francophones to form close ties with the Francophone countries of the world, thus forming a balance with our ties to the Commonwealth. Another is seen in the willing generosity of most Canadians to help relieve poverty and injustice in the world.

This glimpse at some facts about Canada and Africa will help us to better understand Canada's role in Africa. We are used to compromise and moderation in our domestic affairs, and we are trying to generate a similar climate in international affairs. The African countries are seeking to consolidate their autonomy in regard to the former colonial powers and to East-West rivalry, and they greatly appreciate our pragmatic, conciliatory attitude and the absence of any desire on our part to form a hegemony. The large number of African countries in all the international forums amply justifies our policy of rapprochement and co-operation with them.

Since Canada is an intermediate power, we feel that it is important to increase the effectiveness of international institutions whose goals are the protection of everyone's interests. The African countries are in the same situation. Because of these affinities and the influence of the African countries within the international organizations, it is to our advantage to work with them to help them to function better.

As an exporting country, Canada must constantly reinforce and diversify its markets in order to have economic growth. Africa, despite its economic weaknesses as a developing continent, has many dynamic markets that Canadian firms have penetrated considerably. I am of course thinking of Arab Africa, but also of a growing number of sub-Saharan countries like Nigeria, Cameroun, Ethiopia and others. There is so much to do in this part of the world, the needs for equipment and infrastructure are so great, that our companies will always find a market there. The African countries have close ties with Europe, and for this very reason are interested in diversifying their sources of supply and their outlets. They react favourably to offers from Canadian businessmen, when they are competitive, of course.

For humanitarian reasons, for political reasons that have to do with the stability of institutions, and for economic reasons connected with the stability of our markets, Canada is convinced that there can be no real security in the world without a greater measure of social and economic justice. In other words, we are dependent on each other for our prosperity, and this requires an attitude of solidarity on all sides. Canada thus plays an active part in the North-South dialogue, both at the political level and in the realm of development aid. The African countries see us as a serious partner that understands and shares their aspirations. Moreover, the African countries represent nearly half the countries in the Southern Hemisphere, and it is under-