



Statements and Speeches

No. 79/9

"RELATIONS WITH DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN AN INTERDEPENDENT WORLD"

A Statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Flora MacDonald, at the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development Ministerial Council Meeting, Paris, June 13, 1979.

These are the early days of a new Canadian Government. I am very pleased that so soon after taking on my responsibilities I am able to share in the discussion around this table. As members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development we learn much from each other. We learn how others are tackling the problems that we must also tackle. We are reminded of the impact that our policies have on other countries. Here in the OECD we have learned both the habit and the discipline of frank discussion. These are the essential ingredients of constructive co-operation among countries.

The need for co-operative approaches to problems extends well beyond the membership of the OECD. The interdependence of our economies and those of the developing world is not a matter of choice. It is a fact of life. No country, no bloc of countries, can solve its economic problems in isolation. The foundations for broad co-operation in the world economy are not easy to build. The difficulties should however make us all the more determined to pursue discussion with the developing countries in a constructive and practical manner.

UNCTAD V [Fifth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development] ended only ten days ago. That conference — one step in a process of discussion — had its successes and its failures. In part its failures resulted from difficulties in moving into frank discussion of common problems. In part they resulted from the gaps between developed and developing countries in their interpretation of key issues. These differences of view underlay, for example, discussion of the nature of the world's present economic difficulties and the role of governments in trying to solve them. They affected discussion of the process of structural change and the ways in which governments might respond to it.

It is important to try to narrow these gaps in perspective. Studies by the OECD Secretariat have amply demonstrated the increasing number and the deepening significance of the economic links between the developed and the developing countries. That they bring shorter-term problems of adjustment must also be recognized. Our policies and our co-operation with the third world must be focused in ways which recognize the problems we have but which look towards the benefits we all can share. It is often difficult to see through immediate problems to longer-term benefits. That is a fact of economic life, and of our lives as politicians. We must be on guard against short-term policy approaches that endanger openness and flexibility in the world economy. The successful conclusion of the Multilateral Trade Negotiations is a major
