

to encouraging the economic and social improvements that are taking place.

Mr. Speaker, since joining the Organization of American States [OAS] in 1989, Canada has been an active supporter of the OAS in promoting democracy and constitutional rule, judicial reform and the protection of human rights. These challenges have resulted in opportunities to reinforce human development throughout the region. I believe that Canada should continue to support regional initiatives that encourage respect for human rights, environmental protection and trade opportunities. In the process, we must also work to ensure that the poorer nations are not marginalized. Marginalization of the less affluent countries can result in instability, mass population shifts from poorer to richer states, and threaten the process of newly emerging economies. These situations have global effects, and it is therefore worth working toward their prevention.

Most recently, we have accepted the challenge of hemispheric partnership with regard to Haiti. As one of the "four friends" comprising Canada, the United States, France and Venezuela, we will play a major role in OAS and UN efforts to restore democratic, constitutional rule in Haiti, to support the return of President Jena Bertrand Aristide, and to protect human rights.

Cuba poses another challenge. The Cuban economy has undergone serious deterioration; economic reforms have been limited, as have human rights improvements. However, I believe we cannot afford to marginalize any country of this hemisphere. Careful evaluation is necessary to encourage the full reintegration of Cuba into the hemispheric family, a process that will require significant change.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to refer to the recent conflict in the state of Chiapas in Mexico. We have noted favourably the appointments of Manuel Camacho, the former foreign minister, as the conciliator for Chiapas, and Dr. Jorge Carpizo, the former president of the Mexican human rights commission, as the new interior minister. The cease-fire, the amnesty, the involvement in Chiapas of Mexico's national human rights commission, and the tentative agreement reached between the Government and the rebels are positive developments. We look forward to further steps to a political solution, involving alleviation of the fundamental causes of these problems in Chiapas.

Mr. Speaker, Canada's relationship with the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean cannot be classified in general terms, as each country of the region is so vastly different. For those in the initial stages of development, simply providing education and poverty alleviation is not enough. We must also assist them in developing fairer trading relationships with their trading partners throughout the world. This is complicated by the