

If there are frailties in the UN, and there are, if there is some ineptitude, and there is, let us this year celebrate the UN's endurance and accomplishments while resolving to improve procedures.

In conflicts prevented, in disputes mediated, in the eradication of diseases, in world-wide development progress, in the saving of countless human lives, the United Nations has enriched human existence. It has done all this on a budget that is less than \$1 a year for every inhabitant of the planet.

The United Nations should not need to be defended. But it does, and I emphasize that Canada not only defends the UN but will work to strengthen it, and other parts of the multilateral system. This is the way toward the peace and the growth, the freedom and the justice, which the world needs.

The challenges facing the multilateral system reach beyond this institution. Questions are being raised about whether the world will work together, or whether nations will draw back to their individual devices. Whether the issue is debt or trade or culture, whether the nations are rich or poor, large or small, there is a renewal of doubt about the international system. Developing countries, again this week, at this podium, threatened to abandon an international monetary system they believe has abandoned them. Trade protectionist pressures are rampant, and dates are delayed for a new round of multilateral trade negotiations. Expenditures on arms increase; so does terrorism; so have regional conflicts.

If that continues, we will all be the victims. Certainly a country like Canada is imperilled if nations cannot agree on the rules of trade, or the relief of debt, or the control of arms. Twenty-four years ago 12 per cent of our gross national product was based on exports; today this figure has more than doubled. When the United Nations began, Canada was relatively unaffected by violent sectarian disputes in other countries; today we, like the world, are targets of terrorists. Forty years ago, drugs, or technology or the economic policies of other countries had relatively little direct impact on Canada; today they can intrude directly on the life of every Canadian community. So it is with all communities, in all countries. In so small a modern world, we are exposed, inescapably, to common problems, which none of us can solve alone. Instead of retreating inward, the world must reach out, not only to celebrate an anniversary, but to cope with the inescapable reality of modern times.

I renew today the commitment that successive Canadian governments have made to the United Nations since its creation from the ashes of the Second World War. Prime Minister Mulroney reaffirmed Canada's aspirations for the UN personally to the Secretary-General during his official, and very welcome, visit to Canada earlier this year. Next month, the Canadian prime minister will join many other world leaders here to proclaim anew the value of the UN.

This General Assembly, then, will be a time for remembering what has been accomplished over four decades: the virtual end of colonialism, the international recognition of human rights, a commitment to general and complete disarmament, a program for strengthening the financial and trading systems of the world, a convention on the law of the sea, treaties on wide-ranging subjects, inroads on illiteracy, advancement of the status of women.

We are particularly pleased at the consensus that was found at Nairobi, at the conference marking the

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