

In reporting to the House on the results of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, I should like to say at the outset that its immediate results represent a major achievement in the dialogue between developed and developing countries on a new international economic order and that the longer-term impact of Nairobi will be substantial. Obviously, UNCTAD IV (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) -- like all conferences where countries are required to make compromises in order to ensure agreement -- did not achieve all that Canada or other developed and developing countries might have wished. But it was, without question, a most important step in the efforts to reduce disparities between developed and developing countries which were initiated at the Seventh Special Session of the United Nations.

At that session I stated that Canada was determined to play a positive role, to use our resources and our influence to help bring about constructive change in the international economic system and thereby to reduce the gap between rich and poor nations. Governments committed themselves at that time to work together to make changes in the international trade and payments system in order to enable it to contribute to more rapid economic development in the developing countries, and to permit them to obtain a larger and sustained share in world trade.

UNCTAD IV was the first major UN conference following the Seventh Special Session, and in its disagreements as well as in its accords, it reflected these new dimensions: there were efforts to address these questions at a practical level; there were some important new commitments; there was agreement to create a program, time-table and framework for the central issues in which the many essential decisions can be taken.

In my statement to the Conference on May 7, I touched on the four areas Canada considered would be the main issues to be dealt with: the problems of stabilization of commodity trade, the alleviation of the debt servicing difficulties of many developing countries, liberalization of trade to benefit developing countries, and the transfer of technology to developing countries. Of these, the commodities issue proved to be the central focus of the Conference. Indeed, the adoption -- by consensus -- of a resolution which established an integrated program for commodities was the major achievement of UNCTAD IV. The resolution defines the objectives of the integrated program, proposes a list of 18 commodities of particular interest to the developing countries for consideration, describes the international measures to be taken in the context of the program, and establishes procedures and a time-table for pursuing it. On the important question of a Common Fund, the resolution provides for a negotiating conference to be held next year and for a series of preparatory meetings. As a major importer and exporter of commodities we shall be actively involved in these international discussions