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political support behind a vast program to save tropical forests, Mairuth Sarsfield charmed and cajoled famous artists into giving their talents for the United Nations Environment Programme's 1982 tree-planting campaign ("For Every Child a Tree"), and Yvonne Kupsch trekked the by-ways of Sahelian countries to make links with villagers that were starting to grow a woodlot or a windbreak.

There are also additions to political history. Paul Martin gives new details of his brusque encounters with John Foster Dulles and Henry Cabot Lodge in 1955 when he took the initiative to break the ideological logjam, which, for five years, had prevented any more countries from being accepted as UN members. His success in getting a package deal approved for 16 states was probably the most far-reaching move any Canadian has made at the United Nations, however one may assess the effect of "opening the flood-gates." George Ignatieff tells of an episode in 1966, when Pierre Trudeau attended the General Assembly session as Pearson's parliamentary secretary, and which, he surmises, for 10 years effectively squelched enthusiasm in the future prime minister for using the United Nations as an instrument of his foreign policies.

To provide a string on which to hang these dozens of recollections and reflections, or a framework into which to fit them, I have compiled a chronology of events that have some relevance. It is one person's selection, with some personal commentary. This chronology, and the book itself, is divided into four decades. A brief summary heads each decade, mainly to bind together the contributions in that section but also to indicate some of the changes of focus, or shifting influences, that occurred about that time. It can only be approximate, because trends naturally did not alter course neatly in 1955 or 1965 or 1975; scholars must excuse such broadbrush treatment of history.

John Holmes with some modesty suggests that a myth has grown up about "a golden age of Canadian diplomacy" in the 1950s. There have been more than brief flashes of gold since: in particular, the Canadian performance throughout the Third Law of the Sea Conference (1973 to 1982). Stephen Lewis suggests here that the ethos of the United Nations is shifting from issues of arms control and regional conflicts, which cannot be resolved without superpower agreement, to social and economic questions.

Regardless of whether Lewis is correct, Canadians have for years taken a lead in the social and economic sectors. Outstanding examples are the work of Yvon Beaulne on the UN Human Rights Commission and work for the advancement of women as described by Norma Walmsley and Michele Landsberg. Recently, the United Nations has focused on the economic recovery of Africa, to which Canada has committed itself wholeheartedly.

After offering stern criticism of some ineffective parts of the UN system in his speech to the General Assembly in September 1986, Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark concluded: "I remain confident that this institution can serve our common needs and serve them well. We have only to give it the means and the direction."