



Statements and Speeches

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CANADIAN ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH LATIN AMERICA

A speech by Mr. Jacques Gignac, Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, at the Plenary Meeting of the *Forum das Americas*, Sao Paulo, Brazil, June 12, 1979

First of all, I would like to say how honoured I am to be given the opportunity to address such a distinguished audience from all parts of the continent and to bring you salutations from Canada, which I have the privilege of representing at this important congress. I would like to congratulate the organizers of the *Forum das Americas* for their valuable initiative as well as to thank them for their warm hospitality in their great country and this great city. I wish you well for the success of this meeting, which is a remarkable premiere. The economic integration of the continent is an enormously challenging task, for it has as its ultimate goal the development of all of the countries and people of Latin America and the Caribbean.

We had a general election in Canada last month, as you probably know. It brought about a change in our government with the victory of the Conservative Party at the polls on May 22, and a new Cabinet was formed on June 4. I am pleased to report that among her very first remarks to the press on June 5, our new Minister for External Affairs, the Honourable Flora MacDonald, stressed that the new government would give priority to relations with the Western world and especially to Latin American countries. Thus the momentum given by the former administration to our relations with Latin America will not only continue but can be expected to gather strength.

Indeed, Latin America and the Caribbean together constitute a key area of interest for Canada. One of the mainsprings of Canadian foreign policy over the past decade has been to intensify our relations with the countries of the hemisphere, to strengthen relations with the sub-regional groupings of these countries and to foster closer ties between Canadians and Latin Americans on a person-to-person basis.

Today I should like to make a few comments on my country's contribution to the economic integration of our continent and I should like to dwell first on the main features of our approach to Latin America, then on the multilateral and regional aspects of our relationship and our bilateral ties, with particular emphasis on trade and industrial development, investment and export financing as a means of international co-operation. Finally I want to emphasize the Canadian government's role in stimulating and supporting corporate ventures.

In the context of the theme of this conference, one of the main thrusts of Canada's relations with Latin America and the Caribbean region today is in the field of transfer of technology. This takes many forms and involves many sectors. Canada and Canadians are now engaged in many Latin American countries in activities of growing
