

elected as Director-General of UNESCO, succeeding Mr. M'Bow of Sénégal. That same month, Edouard Saouma, from Lebanon, was re-elected for a six-year term as Director-General of FAO. Canada continued to be concerned about the need for institutional and policy reforms in the UN system and particularly in both UNESCO and FAO.

### Reform of the United Nations

By January 1987, the movement to reform the United Nations had acquired significant momentum. Evidently, the majority of member states had come to realize that a stronger and more dynamic UN system was achievable and would better serve their interests and those of the global community. As an active UN reformist, Canada devoted considerable attention to the renewal and strengthening of the UN and exerted leadership especially on budgetary and financial questions, and in reviewing the UN institutional structure in the economic and social fields.

In particular, during the past year, reviews and reassessments were conducted within the UN system in four fields:

First, to resolve the UN financial crisis, emphasis was placed on making economies and on improving budgetary and financial practices. To this end, Canada devised a full set of budgetary systems and procedures to provide the UN and its specialized agencies greater stability and effectiveness.

Second, the process of setting priorities and taking decisions in the UN system was also reviewed. The Committee for Program and Co-ordination (CPC) received enhanced authority to set priorities and to improve the cost-effectiveness of UN programs. During 1987 Canada, although not a member, worked closely with the CPC. Perhaps as a result of this work and of the Canadian commitment to reform, Canada was elected to the CPC during the 42nd General Assembly.

Third, a Special Commission of ECOSOC undertook an in-depth study aimed at simplifying and rationalizing the intergovernmental structure of the UN in the economic and social fields. Canada was among the first to propose how the Commission should undertake this task. Although unfinished, this exercise has shown considerable promise and could do much to revitalize key aspects of the UN system.

Finally, the specialized agencies — UNESCO, FAO, WHO and others — have embarked on a process to reduce expenditures, to improve programs and to set new directions. Canada joined this reform effort and participated in the committees and commissions involved.

### The Commonwealth

Canada provides strong support to the Commonwealth, valuing the role that the association — with its mix of races, religions and cultures — can play on the world scene. Bridging regional and special interest blocs, the Common-

wealth is a model of multilateralism and an important instrument to broaden international understanding and consensus. The association also deepens Canada's bilateral relations with 47 member countries in nearly all regions of the world and reinforces Canadian foreign policy aims.

There was considerable Commonwealth activity during the past year. Canada continued its active participation which culminated in the biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Vancouver in October 1987. The meeting, attended by representatives of the member countries including 37 heads of government, was considered one of the most successful gatherings of the Commonwealth's most senior consultative forum.

Chaired by Prime Minister Mulroney, the Vancouver Summit reviewed the multi-faceted activities of the Commonwealth. It addressed major international political and economic issues ranging from Third World debt to the status of women in society and the threat to low-lying states from rising ocean levels. Three important initiatives were launched:

- a new plan of action for southern Africa including assistance to the Front Line States and Mozambique. A committee of eight foreign ministers was established, chaired by Joe Clark. It was created to provide impetus and guidance in the Commonwealth's struggle against *apartheid* in South Africa. It has already proven to be a valuable forum in responding to South Africa's restrictive actions.
- a Declaration on World Trade to encourage a more liberalized global trading system and to reinforce the current round of multilateral trade negotiations. Canada wrote off the official debt of the poorest Commonwealth African countries.
- a scheme for Commonwealth collaboration in distance education. Based on a Canadian initiative, the scheme will promote the exchange of information, training, technical assistance and research in the application of distance education techniques and communications technologies, with the aim of widening access to priority areas of education and training in the developing Commonwealth countries. This initiative grew out of the discussions on distance education that took place at the Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers held in July 1987 in Nairobi, Kenya.

Canadian development assistance had its roots in the Colombo Plan of the early 1950s, which assisted the Commonwealth countries of South Asia. Today the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC) provides technical assistance to all parts of the developing Commonwealth. The Fund is distinctive because almost all members contribute and maximum use is made of experts from developing countries. Canada is the largest donor to the CFTC, providing approximately \$17.5 million in 1987/88, well over one-third of its total budget.

Canada has also remained active in Commonwealth consultations promoting functional co-operation in a wide variety of fields. For example, Canada was host for the 13th Commonwealth Air Transport Council Meeting in September 1987. The meeting agreed on a new structure and mandate for the Council in anticipation of future challenges in its field.