

economic interests as they had with some of the members of the groups they represented.

Such a reaction was perhaps to be expected, as it was my view at the start that one of the chief objectives of conducting the dialogue in that particular format was to reach a clearer understanding of the international economic situation, of the commonality of interests and interdependence of North and South, of the obstacles to development, and of the concrete possibilities for change.

**Assessment of  
CIEC**

Of course, the Conference's purpose was not simply to achieve better understanding but also to try to bring about progress in the range of issues then under negotiation between developed and developing countries. I will not go into the balance sheet of gains and disappointments recorded by both sides. I would, however, like to quote from the assessment I gave to the House of Commons following the completion of the Conference:

"One cannot easily evaluate a conference such as the Conference on International Economic Co-operation in terms of success or failure. I personally have never expected unqualified success, nor could the developing countries admit to unqualified success even if it were achieved, if only to preserve their positions for future negotiations. I have always hoped for that measure of success which is defined by real progress on the main substantive issues at play, sufficient progress on international economic problems to make it worthwhile to continue to pursue a constructive dialogue between developed and developing countries."

That is what I said three years ago and I still believe that the CIEC achieved much that was concrete, for instance restraint during that period in international oil prices, additional aid and debt relief for the poorest countries and in launching the negotiations for the Common Fund aimed at commodity stabilization, and it is regrettable so much has been lost since, as a result of the failure to build upon the momentum and understanding achieved. Three years after the conclusion of the CIEC, agreement has been reached on a treaty establishing this new institution. I expect that Canada will be in a position to sign this agreement very soon. That Conference kept the dialogue going and helped define the agenda for future discussions.

I have given you my impressions of the CIEC because I think they illustrate well the *problem of differing perceptions and differing expectations concerning the North-South dialogue*. My perceptions differ sharply from assessments which have become fashionable and almost unthinkingly automatic.

However, even more important than the characterization of the results of any particular North-South meeting, is the North-South process itself. Is it a somewhat academic discussion of esoteric issues — or, as an international cynic once put it, "coming down from the clouds on a string of words" — is it a unilateral process of request by the poor and concession by the rich? Whatever interpretation may be made of the past, the rise of the South not only in numbers but in terms of power, influence, knowledge and responsibility is shaping the process into a bold attempt to achieve a new kind of partnership between North and South in the management of

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