

As I indicated in the message which I sent to you and your colleagues on the occasion of your founding meeting in August in Cartagena, we welcome this fresh and timely example of key South American countries providing solidarity behind the Contadora process. I believe it is no coincidence that, soon after this meeting with your Contadora colleagues, genuine progress was made at the Contadora meetings with the five Central American countries which recently concluded in Panama.

Canada is, of course, far away geographically from Latin America. I make this rather obvious statement to explain why our position is that of supporter not leader in the search for peace in Central America. But as a part of this hemisphere we must acknowledge a responsibility to be constructive where that is practical and where it is welcome. This clarifies, in part, why our support for Contadora has been much more than simply rhetorical. I have made it clear that, if invited, Canada would make available to the Contadora countries our expertise and our advice on verification and control. The invitation was forthcoming and Canada has provided detailed comments on four occasions and assistance to the Contadora countries in the design of the verification and control mechanism.

I repeat to you Mr. Minister, as I did to Mr. Sepulveda, the Foreign Minister of Mexico only last week in New York, that Canada remains prepared to provide any further advisory assistance in this field which may be helpful.

Our preoccupation with the crisis in Central America and our willingness to help has manifested itself in our ways. Consistent with the spirit and objectives of Contadora, Canada maintains its development assistance commitments to Central America. This we are doing despite austerity and the inevitable shrinkage of budgets. In recognition of the very positive steps which have been made in El Salvador, particularly under President Duarte, toward the development of a genuine democratic process and the significant reduction of human rights violations, Canada has restored its aid program to that country. In the difficult circumstances which still prevail in El Salvador, the central focus of our aid will be humanitarian. Our projects will involve non-governmental organizations and will be especially directed to displaced persons.

In Nicaragua Canada has actively supported the efforts of one of the associations of indigenous peoples, the Misurasata, to work out a satisfactory *modus vivendi* with the government in Managua which would enable them to return to their traditional homelands in peace and to protect the integrity of their culture.

Canada has repeatedly expressed its continued concern about the related issues of human rights, displaced persons and refugees in Central America. We have steadily increased the number of refugees we have taken from this area. Last year Canada accepted 3 000 of these persons and this year a similar number will be accepted.

With respect to the international debt situation, I am very conscious of the economic difficulties that Latin America is confronting. We in Canada have followed closely the development of President Alfonsin's economic policies and I want to express my admiration for the courageous steps that the Argentine government has taken to deal with an economic situation that would pose a challenge for

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