

In addition to the multilateral channels that I have just discussed, La Francophonie is an element in our bilateral relations. In this context, we have established a network of bilateral diplomatic representation with all the francophone countries. With many of them we have developed an important program of development assistance. We have either started or we are involved in political dialogue on major international issues, as well as being a member of all multilateral francophone organizations. I will not take time to discuss our bilateral relations with the francophone countries of Europe. French-speaking Canadians have their roots there and they are fairly well aware of the nature of these relations. I am now going to look at the active, sustained bilateral relations that Canada is pursuing, ever more intensively, with Africa.

What are the goals of our bilateral relations with these countries, for which I personally feel a special affinity? Today, Canada-African relations have reached an advanced stage of maturity, and we are beginning to have a solid experience in Africa. Canada is actively pursuing the main objectives of its foreign policy in Africa. To begin with, we wish to contribute effectively, in the interest of social justice, to the development of the African countries, especially the least advantaged ones. The scope of our activities in this area is an indication of our serious approach and our good intentions. Secondly, we wish to manifest our national identity on the world scene, and especially in Africa, by developing and strengthening our ties with the Francophone countries as well as with the members of the Commonwealth. Thirdly, we wish to form durable and mutually beneficial economic ties with the African countries. We have great confidence in the development of Africa, a continent that has so much potential, and we realize that aid must increasingly give way to the formation of beneficial trade relations, this being part of the reason for the North-South dialogue. Fourthly, we wish to contribute toward maintaining peace and security in Africa, as we did in the former Congo, in Zimbabwe, in Uganda, and now in Namibia. Of course, we do not wish to interfere in the domestic affairs of these countries, as we respect their desire to find their own solutions to the major conflicts that are still affecting certain regions of the Continent. Fifthly, we wish to contribute toward improving the quality of life, especially the environment. Let me point out here that the first Secretary-General of the United Nations Environment Program headquartered in Nairobi, was Mr. Maurice Strong, a Canadian.

I have been on official visits to many African countries. I can tell you that these countries have