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I need not rehearse the long negotiating history of this initiative since it was first proposed in the autumn of 1979. It has perhaps been one of the most difficult and certainly most frustrating experiences for countries interested in advancing North-South discussions. In the past year the international community has moved slowly, if not always too surely, to a point where, in Canada's view, compromise was, and is, ripe.

On balance, — and whatever the outcome — I believe that the contribution of the summits over the past year to this process must be seen as positive. In my view, they commanded a priority for the issue in the absence of which the idea of global negotiations might well have died a quiet death in New York long ago. More specifically, and as you are all aware, one major country with serious reservations about the exercise was encouraged to move from readiness in Ottawa "to participate in preparations for a mutually acceptable process of global negotiations in circumstances offering the prospect of meaningful progress", to support at Cancun for the search for a consensus to launch global negotiations "with a sense of urgency", and finally to approval of global negotiations at Versailles "as a major political objective". This indeed was movement, and movement generated by the process of summitry.

At Versailles, moreover, I was delighted that the seven major industrialized countries proved able to accept the Group of 77 text of last March as the basis for negotiation of an enabling resolution to allow global negotiations to begin. I felt this acceptance, in particular, constituted an important movement. With this, I hoped it would be possible by the summer to resolve at last the procedural issue of launching global negotiations that has plagued the North-South dialogue for so long, and to begin finally to focus on tackling the substantive problems involved.

Based on the Versailles consultations, Canada was asked to put forward in New York some relatively minor amendments to the Group of 77 text. During the last three weeks of June, we pursued an intensive series of negotiations with the Group of 77 leadership. Unfortunately, however, final agreement could not be reached in the time available. A delay caused by the need to clarify the status of the Versailles amendments may have contributed in part to a dissipation of the negotiating momentum. But I was particularly disappointed that the Group of 77 as a whole could not agree at that time to the proposed changes; I understand the majority of developing countries would have been prepared to do so.

I would therefore like to take this opportunity to appeal once again to the Group of 77 to reconsider its position. Surely our common objective must be to get global negotiations launched and to get them launched soon. Surely we must question the utility of a seemingly endless word-game. The text presented in June is very largely the one put forward by the Group of 77 in March. It has been approved at the highest political levels in summit countries and is supported by all developed countries as a reasonable basis to allow global negotiations to proceed. I can only hope, therefore,

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