

We may well not endorse all of the foreign policy imperatives of the American—or indeed of the Mexican—government, in promoting this initiative, but we can, I am confident, find common cause in the overriding need to develop the region and therefore find ways of reconciling our differing objectives. National motivations need not be identical for a common plan of action to be established.

For too long there has been a tendency to consider Latin America and the Caribbean as a single area, ignoring the fact that it is an area made up of 39 independent countries, dependent colonies and territories where the languages spoken are English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch, in which at least 20 have enjoyed political independence for over 150 years and all of which were at one time colonies of the great European colonial empires. Almost the only common thing about them is their colonial heritage and the fact that in many of them Spanish is the common language.

But these countries are no more like each other than are Australia and Canada. Each has its own history, its own racial mixtures, its own social development and its own economic status and potential. We must, therefore, deal with them individually.

Some will be important to us as export markets; others as sources of needed imports. Some will be sources of immigrants; others the destination of Canadian tourists. Some will be important because of their role in international affairs; others because of their need for development assistance to which we can contribute. Some will have shared political values. All have cultural traditions to which we can relate and in which we can share for the mutual benefit of our societies and our peoples.

Looked at in economic terms, these Latin states are all countries of the South. What is Canada's role in Latin America, or indeed in other parts of the world, in promoting the North-South dialogue? The government agrees with the Parliamentary Task Force on North-South Relations that Canada should base the development of Canadian policy on North-South issues on two major principles. First, the mutuality of interest of both North and South in solving global economic problems. Second, the humanitarian need to focus attention and resources on the world's poorest peoples and countries. These concepts will motivate Canada's aid programs and govern our efforts in the search for compromise.

[*Translation*]

Neither countries of the North nor those of the South constitute homogeneous groups. In spite of their diversity the south countries draw their feeling of unity from the convictions they share and from a common perception of their position in the world. Among other things, they are convinced that the international economic system has been overly favourable to the rich countries, and that is why they are asking that the rules of the game be changed. They want the system to be more accommodating for them. The poorest among them entertain more limited ambitions: they only want to survive, to improve their lot to a certain extent, and to keep their societies

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intact, and that regardless of forces and situations over which they often have no control whatsoever.

We should not wonder if developing countries seek to use existing international institutions to achieve their aims. New industrialized countries, such as Brazil, are ever more active within the GATT. Canada itself did contribute to set up post-war international institutions because it looked upon them as a means of reducing its own vulnerability and opening new avenues for international co-operation.

Unfortunately, the poorest countries are the ones which will probably benefit the least from any change in the institutions or in the exchange and payment system which might result from the North-South negotiations. It is towards those poorest countries—Haiti, Honduras and Guyana—that Canada will continue to direct its bilateral aid. In fact, our bilateral public aid to development has always been concentrated on low income developing nations. During the seventies that concentration accounted for an average of 70 per cent of our funds earmarked for public aid to development. Canada ranks first among industrialized nations in terms of percentage of aid to development which it gives to the poorest countries. The main objective of the Canadian program of co-operation and development is to support the efforts which the developing nations are themselves making to meet the needs of their own people. To that end, the bilateral program will be focused on three priority sectors: agriculture, energy and human resources development. It is in those three sectors that Canada's resources are best tailored to the needs of developing countries. We will be giving priority treatment to those sectors in the coming years.

[*English*]

As far as Canada is concerned, our commitment to development assistance is now well entrenched. Let me simply reiterate the government's policy to allocate to ODA 0.5 per cent of our GNP by 1985 and to do our utmost to achieve the international target of 0.7 per cent by 1990.

As some members well know, I take particular interest in promoting consultations with NGOs, church leaders and business representatives, and I have been impressed by their strong moral and intellectual commitment to the over-all Canadian effort in favour of Third World development. I would like to pay tribute to the impressive work that is carried out by NGOs and the church groups in Latin America, and I would like to repeat the strong commitment of this government to continue supporting financially the initiatives taken by private citizens in this country.

I want just to mention a serious issue with a human face which is having an adverse impact on the economic and social development prospects of many developing countries. I refer to the international refugee situation, the dimensions of which are expanding at an alarming rate.

There are now some 10 million refugees in different parts of the world and many more millions of internally displaced persons. The situation in Africa, which has witnessed a quintu-