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Notes for a Speech by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, at the Conference on Canada and the French-Speaking Nations of Africa, organized by the CIAE and the Canadian National Commission for UNESCO in Montreal, January 23, 1965.

I take a special interest in addressing the participants in this Conference on the theme of Canada and the French-speaking nations of Africa. Your presence here and the very subject of your meetings are evidence that French Canada is increasingly aware of the great part that non-governmental organizations and private individuals must play in promoting a better understanding of international problems and more enlightened support for Canadian foreign policy. Your meetings mark the opening, in a way, of the French-Canadian contribution to the United Nations International Co-operation Year. This Conference is also the first organized in the Province of Quebec by the Canadian National Commission for UNESCO.

The international problems confronting us are the result, to a large extent, of a lack of comprehension and intercommunication between peoples belonging to different races, cultural backgrounds and continents. Moreover, we live in a world in which the rapid changes affecting all fields of human endeavour make all the more obvious the interdependence that exists between nations. For a middle power such as Canada, this interdependence has taken the form mainly, since the Second World War, of participation in the Atlantic Alliance, special links with Europe and America and ties with the Commonwealth and the United Nations, as well as the commercial activities resulting from the development of our national resources. All these links constitute an expression of the tasks that devolve upon us as partners in the development of the free world. But this is not all that we see in interdependence.

In the twentieth century, one of the most significant developments of which, surely, consists in the metamorphosis of the old empires into numerous independent nations, Canada is also aware of the fact that international peace, with prosperity, which depends upon it, cannot be assured until the majority of the peoples no longer have to contend with poverty and illiteracy. This task of helping the developing peoples, not only in the name of national interest but also as a matter of social justice, we undertook almost 15 years ago. Although the Canadian Government itself faces great problems owing to our present internal readjustment and our considerable progress, it is aware of its responsibility for the provision of assistance to developing countries,