

ANNEX "B"

REMARKS BY THE HON. CHRISTINE STEWART
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It is a great pleasure for me to call to order this distinguished gathering of experts on the UN to discuss an issue much on our minds, as Canadians: the future of the UN Security Council. Your seminar is timely: the General Assembly's General Debate starts next Monday, and many of the issues you will discuss today will be on the minds of Leaders and Ministers in New York.

The UN has been going through a bad patch of late. Nevertheless, we should not overlook the tremendous strides made by the Organization since the end of the Cold War in promoting peace and democratic development in places as diverse as Namibia, Mozambique, Haiti and El Salvador. We must also bear in mind the significant advances that spreading democracy has created for more universal respect of human rights. Finally, the impressive work of so many UN agencies in fighting disease, promoting literacy, advancing the role of women in the economy, fostering new agricultural techniques and working towards nuclear safety should be sources of reassurance and pride for us all.

However, the Organization's most important organ, the Security Council, is in trouble. The Council's role in prevention and mediation seems to have become atrophied just as the UN's crippling financial crisis has demoralized the organization, its supporters and its staff. The UN's chronic financial crisis is eminently solvable. The sums of money required are modest, but as we all know the unwillingness of some to pay their dues mainly reflects strong animosity towards the institution. Perhaps more seriously, is that after recent setbacks in somalia, rwanda and bosnia, all involving the use of force, the Council seems to have lost its resolve to tackle new crises meaningfully. It is important to learn lessons from our failures, but we cannot allow them to immobilize us. The Council's hesitation to act recently in supporting African states seeking to address the Burundi crisis shames us all. But at the same time, the era in which tens of thousands of troops can be dispatched to address civil strife in distant continents, as suggested by Mr. Boutros-Ghali, is also clearly over. We need to develop new approaches to these problems while supporting regional initiatives.

Let me mention several issues of particular concern to me. The first relates to the UN's staying power. Most of the essentially internal conflicts the Council has tackled in recent years require a long-term commitment from the international community to carry out peace-building. "Early exit scenarios" for UN missions may be attractive to military and other planners, but they often undermine precisely what we are trying to achieve. For example, on Haiti, the Council's most recent mandate extensions have been for only four and five months respectively, creating tremendous uncertainty in Haiti itself and planning problems for nations contributing personnel. Another of my concerns also relates to peace-building, where the Security Council should be playing a much