

on postponing the final meeting until the Spring. Since that time, we have kept in regular communication seeking the best conditions and timing for resumption (and termination) of this unique experiment in international relations. Clearly our thinking -- as has that of most participants -- has been influenced by the arrival of a new Administration in the United States. There has been a great desire to allow President Carter time to review and formulate his policies for international assistance, and consequently the pressure has not been too strong for immediate resumption. However, the Group of 19, when it met in Paris last month did express the hope that the final Ministerial meeting would be held in mid-May. The Group of Eight met earlier this month and confirmed its willingness to bring the meeting to a successful conclusion. With this backing from our respective groups, Dr. Perez-Guerrero and I met again on Monday of this week to initiate preparations for the final phase. We agreed on a calendar of work which has been proposed to the participating countries. It is our opinion that the Conference is now entering into a final decisive phase and we are hopeful that it will result in a successful Ministerial meeting.

Clearly, however, whatever agreements are reached at this meeting, there will be a continuing North/South dialogue. The problems which we are facing are immense and will require enormous efforts to overcome. The alternative to moving forward is increased tension, with all the opportunities this gives to disruptive moves in vitally important political and economic areas. The challenge is great and much will depend on the goodwill, flexibility and realism of all participants if progress is to be made. It is up to the world community, all together, to recreate a climate of confidence.

This crucial period of concertation carries with it promising signs of an improved and more equitable world economic system. The achievement of success within CIEC will require more intensive coordination of the respective national positions of the industrialized countries and a clearer definition of the priorities by the group of Third World and OPEC countries in recognition of the important but incomplete contribution CIEC can make. Indeed the North/South dialogue is and will be pursued in other international fora, for example in the UNCTAD Negotiating Conference on the Common Fund and other UN institutions, in the western economic summit and in the Commonwealth Heads of government meeting.