

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

87/50



STATEMENT DISCOURS

MINISTER
FOR
EXTERNAL
RELATIONS.

MINISTRE
DES
RELATIONS
EXTÉRIEURES.

"CONSTRUCTIVE INTERNATIONALISM:
DEEDS, NOT WORDS"

Speech given by the
Honourable Monique Landry,
Minister for International
Relations, on the occasion of
the Group of 78 Conference

STONEY LAKE, ONTARIO

September 25, 1987.

Dear friends of the Group of '78.

I was going through the names of your Group and two thoughts came to my mind.

First, what an extraordinary gathering of concerned Canadians this is, and what a remarkable representation of all the facets of our mosaic: people from all walks of life, writers, businessmen, union members, religious leaders, politicians - yes even politicians, Noble Prize winners, and, I was about to forget, political scientists and international relations specialists.

My second thought was a deep feeling that a common thread united all these names, as it were, and that is compassion, a constant and formidable dedication to the betterment of humanity.

You represent, in a way, the authentic values of Canada, the values which, over time and despite continuously changing circumstances in our troubled world, have earned for Canada respect, recognition and esteem abroad. While the Government and the Group of 78 may not always agree on means - do all 78 even agree among themselves at all times? - we are always unanimous on goals.

In 1981, the Group of 78 addressed a letter to the then Prime Minister suggesting that Canada adopt an integrated approach to its foreign policy. I think it is fair to say that this Government has made great strides towards achieving this goal, which we shared wholeheartedly from the moment we came to power.

Indeed, I cannot but note the close, if not necessarily concerted, link between the action of your group and what has now become the trademark of this Government in the foreign policy realm: constructive internationalism.

Let me give you an example of this: the Group of 78 has always stressed the need to link our efforts to promote peace and disarmament with our

contribution towards international cooperation and development. I think we have met this challenge and even gone beyond that. At the recent United Nations sponsored Conference on Disarmament and Development it is Canada which ensured that security be defined, from now on, in terms of both disarmament and development and that development be given its broadest possible meaning.

It is, therefore, not without considerable pride that - in front of as dignified, yet as demanding a group as yours - I claim this government has defined, with the full support of the Canadian population, an active and responsible global foreign policy. This in turn has enabled us to ensure greater coherence to the conduct of our foreign policy.

I would want to put this both from the perspective of what this Government has done over the past three years and in terms of what it intends to do in future. You will forgive me, I hope, for emphasizing, in the latter respect, the delivery of aid as one of the most fundamental elements of Canada's foreign policy and, I should add, as an area for which I shoulder much of the responsibility.

Constructive internationalism has permeated every single foreign policy initiative of this government, be it the enhancement of our sovereignty and independence, the support of both national economic renewal and national reconciliation or the strengthening of multilateral cooperation.

In seeking to exercise leadership in the management of the world economy through international economic institutions, or to fight protectionism and foster the early launching of the multilateral trade negotiations, we have striven to provide Canada with a stable macroeconomic environment.

Each time we work on putting Canada-USA relations on a better footing or on strengthening relations with Pacific Rim countries, when we both reinforce our contribution to our common defence and play as we did a full part in arms control negotiations and improving East-West relations, or whenever we work towards the creation of the Francophone Summit or the strengthening of the Commonwealth, we are practicing constructive internationalism.

But all of this can be summarized in one word: influence. Canada is one of the few countries of the world which, in a way, feels it has accomplished more in expanding its influence in the world than in building up its power.

I submit that the world we live in needs influence. It already has enough - too much - power. Do I need to list the areas where the guns of power have taken over from the words of influence? Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon, the Middle East more generally, Central America. Alternatively, is it not reassuring to note that within the endless power struggle between the two superpowers, the influence of reason is about to prevail on long- and short-range INF?

It may be less spectacular to exert influence than to impose one's power. Yet it is much more effective, particularly over the long haul. For instance, Our major effort at revitalizing the United Nations - from within - is clear evidence of our approach. We want the UN to regain its relevance as a forum for reducing regional tensions. We also want it to be more effective as a guide for economic renewal in less developed countries. We want to ensure that specialized agencies do their work rather than fight among themselves for power.

Our influence is also demonstrated in our efforts to promote human rights and social justice in the world. Canada has assumed a leadership role in harnessing the collective will of nations in fighting racial discrimination in South Africa. We have certainly not won the war against the scourge of apartheid. Yet, through our extraordinary network of influence through the Commonwealth, the countries of La Francophonie and even the Summit Seven, we hope that some day the winds of change will bring about the dismantling of state sponsored racism in South Africa. Meanwhile, we shall continue providing assistance and encouragement to the front line states.

I could go on and on with examples of Canadian influence throughout the world. Yet, I think that what is important is that Canada's role abroad is both distinctive and appreciated.

Take Africa, for example. Canada is held in especially high regard there. Canadians are known for their contribution to famine relief, debt assistance and economic development. When I went to the recent continental conference in Nigeria on African economic recovery, Canada was the only Western country to have been invited to attend. Canada played a leading role, last year, at the UN Special Assembly on African economic recovery. Ambassador Lewis is the Secretary General's special advisor on this very issue. I take considerable pride in seeing our Prime Minister as the only head of government of the Summit Seven to visit Southern Africa since the independence of Zimbabwe. It was a clear manifestation of our appreciation of the plight which front-line states have been facing in continuing attempts by South Africa to destabilise their countries.

Between North and South, between East and West, between developed and developing, from Francophonie to Commonwealth, from the USA to the GATT and the MTN, we are bridge-builders. Few countries can claim as much influence. Few countries are as unselfish in letting others benefit from it.

You will not be surprised, therefore, if I turn to Canadian Official Development Assistance as one of the most critical operational expressions of this influence, on the ground.

You will recall that one of our 1984 campaign commitments was to undertake a full review of official development assistance, as part of the general foreign policy review. The government's position paper which was tabled last week is the culmination of an extensive process of consultation. In fact, we took three cuts at it, through the Simard-Hockin Report in December 1986, then the Senate Committee Report on International Financial Institutions and the Debt Problem of Developing Countries of April 1987, and finally, the May 1987 Winegard or SCEAIT Report to which the document entitled "To Benefit a Better World" is the official government response. I need not, therefore, over emphasize in front of a group such as this, how much this government has taken seriously its commitment towards not only improving the delivery of our aid programs but of ensuring that these rest on rock-solid foundations.

The unanimity which underpinned the recommendations of SCEAIT made our task both easy and demanding. The report could not but reflect the collective views of the aid constituency in Canada, a large and vocal group for which I really think I am the spokesperson in government. Thus the government took up the challenge and we readily endorsed the three principles which SCEAIT suggested form the basis of our aid policy.

First, there is the primary focus on assistance to the poorest countries and people of the world. We demonstrated recently in Québec City, at the Francophone Summit, that these were not just words for us but that we could match our words with deeds. On that occasion we cancelled \$325 million worth of public official assistance debt owed to us by French speaking African nations and pledged \$17 million in new aid projects in these countries.

Secondly, the emphasis is on strengthening human and institutional capacities in developing countries. Again, Canada's official development assistance programs have stressed and will increasingly emphasize the creation of the economic and social infrastructures conducive to the development of human capacities and management abilities. For instance, our Women in Development Plan of Action is inspired by this concept.

Thirdly, SCEAIT suggested that development priorities should always prevail in establishing program objectives. I believe that although we have never forgotten Canadian businessmen's interests in furthering trade through aid, neither have we ever let commercial interests override developmental priorities.

We see the participation of the Canadian business community in the delivery of our aid programs much in the same way as we see the involvement of the non-profit sector into it: it is a matter of both quality and dedication in responding, ultimately, to the needs of developing countries. Of course, I also know very well that when it comes to quality and dedication, our business sector is second to none.

As you know, we have added a fourth principle to the three proposed by SCEAIT: that development assistance must strengthen the links between Canadian citizens and institutions and those of the countries of the Third World. The ultimate goal is to create a true partnership among all people of good will, a human chain.

Each recommendation the Committee put forward has been carefully and thoroughly examined. As you know from our response of last week, most we could endorse. There are a few which we cannot accept in practice although we applaud the intent that lies behind them.

I am thinking here of the call for the classification of developing countries in a grid according to detailed criteria for measuring human rights performance. I agree on the importance of taking human rights considerations fully into account in planning Canada's aid programs. But I will never let the poor be penalized for actions of their governments nor will I let the victims of oppressive regimes suffer twice from the same predicament.

While we will be giving more weight to human rights performance in terms of the eligibility framework, the emphasis on human resource development will ensure that those who suffer benefit most from our programs. Our commitment to human rights is also reflected in our decision to create an international centre for human rights and institutional development.

For 13 years now, the issue of a thorough review and reform of our aid policy has been the subject of endless debates. The day has finally come. Very shortly I shall be presenting a strategy aimed at setting both the philosophy and the guidelines underlying the future delivery of our foreign aid programs to the year 2000. Again, deeds must follow words and every and all Canadians have to be active participants in this endeavour.

In an interdependent world, international relations are part and parcel of the daily lives of all Canadians. Foreign policy, for this government, is very much a domestic - or internal - priority. Never before have Canadians been as involved as they are today in the making of their foreign policy.

We are also determined that Canada's foreign policy expresses and unifies the various elements of Canadian society. The Francophone Summit, like the Meech Lake Accord, reflects a new sense of confidence in ourselves. So does the leadership role we have taken in the Commonwealth. We are working closely and harmoniously with all the provinces in all the areas of our foreign policy of concern to them. This includes discussion at the highest level, in the Conferences of First Ministers.

We are reflecting in our foreign policy the desires of Canadians for a safer, more prosperous and humane world. The world needs the active participation of a country like Canada which will always remain fundamentally committed to the importance of multilateralism. International cooperation and coordination are critical in an interdependent world and we have worked strenuously to reinforce such cooperative trends in the world whenever and wherever they materialized. We have also renewed Canada's commitment to both collective security and to trade liberalization.

Our policy of constructive internationalism is, we think, the most appropriate response to interdependence. Insularity is not. Protectionism is not.

Interdependence is a reality. It is also an opportunity. It is an opportunity for us to shape the world in a way that accords more exactly with the traditions of tolerance and the traditions of moderation which have been part of this country. Constructive internationalism is the projection abroad of our own national enterprise of compromise and consensus-building. It is true to a long cherished legacy of Canadian foreign policy. It expresses confidence in our ability to promote the best of what Canada has to offer. We think it accurately reflects the wishes of ordinary Canadians right across the country.