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Notes for an address by
the Honourable Monique Landry,
Minister for External Relations,
on the occasion of the dinner
hosted by Canada at the symposium
of the International Association
of Mayors Responsible for Capital
Cities or Metropolises Partially
or Entirely French-Speaking (IAMF)

QUEBEC CITY, April 7, 1987

OTTAWA

April 28, 1987.

Honourable Ministers,

Your Worships,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure today, as Minister for External Relations, to welcome our guests from abroad.

I am equally delighted by the initiative taken by the International Association of Mayors Responsible for Capital Cities or Metropolises Partially or Entirely French-Speaking in organizing this symposium on urban information management.

This symposium is yet another step toward fuller understanding of the problems faced by municipalities in both industrialized and developing nations. It is primarily a forum for the exchange of ideas between persons with the same goal: to manage scarce resources so that the growing demand for urban services can be met. This forum will allow us to share our expertise and determine ways to transfer and adapt this expertise.

I believe the theme you have chosen for your symposium, urban information management, is an excellent example of the type of debate we must stimulate at another important event soon to take place in Quebec City. The second Summit of Heads of State and Heads of Government of Countries using French as a Common Language will be held here from September 2 to 4. I would like to take this opportunity to salute our Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, whose historic vision, expressed through his policy of national reconciliation, made possible the organization of the first summit held in Paris last February.

Credit for the great success of the Paris summit must go to France, which managed to organize the event in a very short period of time. And credit must go, in particular, to the leaders of the nations and governments who accepted President Mitterand's invitation, thus demonstrating their confidence in the international Francophone community. This confidence was reaffirmed when it came time to accept the invitation extended by the Prime Minister of Canada, in association with the Premier of Quebec, to attend the Quebec City summit.

At the political level, the foundations of solidarity between Francophone communities around the world have thus been laid. And, following in the footsteps of the Paris summit, the Quebec City summit will, we hope, refine and reinforce the spirit of mutual aid and solidarity that has always sustained the ideal of "La Francophonie". Above all, we hope that further progress will be made toward establishing concrete action plans designed to promote the welfare of French-speaking peoples.

With this in mind, and as minister responsible for the Canadian International Development Agency, I would like to explain briefly why we Canadians are particularly interested in your work.

There are four main reasons. The first is that, in the relatively near future, most of this planet's inhabitants will live in cities. The urban population explosion is creating enormous tensions and extremely complex problems in our rapidly changing societies. We must, therefore, find solutions today to the challenges that will confront the city dwellers of tomorrow.

Second, the majority of these urban dwellers live in the Third World. Of all the world's cities, those in the developing nations are now growing the most rapidly. In forty years, if current trends continue, the urban population of Africa will be three times greater than that of North America. By the end of the century, the population of Mexico City will have risen from 18 million to 26 million. Sao Paulo's population increases by 500,000 every year, and that of New Delhi has doubled in the last thirty years.

Third, the proportion of urban dwellers living in large cities is constantly on the increase. This urbanization process is most rapid in Africa. At the end of this century, the world will have five megalopolises with over 15 million inhabitants each. Three of these will be Third World cities. Moreover, sixteen of the world's twenty largest cities will be located in the Third World.

We do not yet know all the possible repercussions of this phenomenal rate of growth. But one thing we can do right now is begin sharing what we know about urban management.

The fourth reason for our interest is the fact that urban growth in the developing nations is not likely to stop in the near future. It will continue until the twenty-first century before reaching a plateau, and by then will have doubled in twenty years.

According to the latest report by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, the urban populations of developing countries are increasing several times faster than their rural populations, largely because of the migration of rural populations toward urban centres.

Certain consequences of this phenomenon have already been identified. It is calculated, for example, that 300 million new housing units will have to be built in the next fifteen years.

In many of the world's cities, squatters make up fifty per cent of the population, living in crude quarters in slums that go by different names in different countries.

Unfortunately, I could go on at length enumerating the serious conditions that stem from the accelerated urbanization evident in every one of our countries, without exception.

But I know that you, more than anyone, understand the urgency of these problems and the necessity of sharing our knowledge of urban management. If, for example, one of our capital cities was able to take advantage of an innovative idea proposed on another continent, we could then put our limited resources to better use. This will be important in future, for municipal budgets will not keep pace with population growth, and we will, therefore, be obliged to do more with less.

In the developing nations, in fact, much more will have to be done with much less. Even in Canada, where the gross national product is \$12,000 per capita, municipal funding is often a problem area. Where then will countries with a GNP of \$200 find the resources they require?

For urban projects to succeed, they must be in keeping with national economic priorities. But there must be international co-operation as well, and pooling of existing resources and expertise.

In such a context, what is the role of an agency such as CIDA? CIDA is devoted to meeting the needs and priorities of developing nations, but it also supports the initiatives of its various Canadian partners.

We therefore encourage international co-operation initiatives that involve both municipalities and institutions.

Last November, at a symposium held in Vancouver, 150 representatives of Canadian cities, with the assistance of resource persons from urban areas in developing countries, met to design new urban initiatives in the areas of international trade and development assistance. This symposium was sponsored by CIDA and organized under the auspices of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the City of Vancouver.

CIDA has also lent its support to a municipal project related to international co-operation that was proposed by the Federation and the Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators and, last June, brought together senior administrators from Third World municipalities and their counterparts from Canadian cities, including Quebec City. This avant-garde pilot project is still in the preliminary stages, but is opening up new vistas in the area of international co-operation.

Next September, the first Capitals of the World Conference, to be attended by representatives of some one hundred capital cities, will be held in Ottawa.

We are also interested in developing a project under the Africa 2000 program that will encourage the twinning of urban centres. This twinning project would try to involve not only Canadian municipalities, but also the private sector, schools, and non-profit organizations working within these municipalities.

In addition, under a technical support project in the Douala district of Cameroon, a Canadian resource person experienced in municipal technical services was sent to work on location and give his Cameroonian colleagues the benefit of his knowledge and skills.

CIDA has also provided funding to support a Canadian Federation of Municipalities program in fourteen Chinese cities. The program will involve training in municipal planning and development, international trade and foreign investment. Municipalities across Canada will have the opportunity to contribute their own expertise to this very special project.

These are some examples of what can be done to initiate dialogue and thus begin to meet the immense challenge before us.

It is obvious that not only governments, but the private sector, volunteer organizations, institutes and other public bodies as well, must participate in meeting this challenge, if our efforts are to be as effective as possible.

The valuable and timely symposium taking place here in Quebec City is the fruit of such co-operation.

To the international expertise of the IAMF, you have added the experience and ability of the Quebec private sector, the Union des municipalités du Québec, the Association des directeurs généraux des municipalités du Québec and the Ecole nationale d'administration publique as well as several Quebec government departments.

You have also enriched this concerted Quebec effort by going out to consult with African representatives and urban specialists in order to verify the pertinence of your plans. This attention to detail and this desire to identify the best and most useful skills we have to offer not only guarantee the success of this symposium, but also set an example of the road we must follow in any attempt to offer effective assistance.

CIDA wishes to encourage the development of this fountain of good will, resources and expertise. We are open to any new strategy that will help us meet the challenge posed by the urbanization of the Third World.

Thank you.