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STATEMENT DISCOURS

SECRETARY
OF STATE
FOR EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS.

SECRÉTAIRE
D'ÉTAT AUX
AFFAIRES
EXTÉRIEURES.

UNITED NATIONS' DAY MESSAGE
BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OF CANADA, FLORA MACDONALD,
TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
OF THE UNITED NATIONS,
KURT WALDHEIM,
OCTOBER 24, 1979

TEXT OF THE LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, FLORA MACDONALD, TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS, KURT WALDHEIM, OCTOBER 24, 1979

On behalf of the Government and people of Canada, it is my pleasure to convey to you, and to the staff members of the United Nations and its affiliated organizations, our warmest wishes on the occasion of the thirty-fourth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

I know that during this particular week, for the first time designated as one devoted to fostering disarmament, the Government and people of Canada will pay special attention to the efforts of the United Nations in its pursuit of the general goal of disarmament. The United Nations Special Session on Disarmament in 1978 provided new impetus in this field and we are encouraged by the renewed interest on the part of other member states in arms control and disarmament. I wish to reaffirm our dedication to these goals and that we will continue to participate actively in the negotiation of multilateral disarmament agreements within the framework of the United Nations.

Of particular interest to Canada was the emphasis placed by UNSSOD and UNGA 33 on the importance of more research and education in disarmament. Canada has been very active in this field in the past year through the activity of the newly-created office of the Adviser on Disarmament and Arms Control Affairs. We hope that greater emphasis on the information aspect of disarmament and arms control will heighten public awareness of the issues in Canada and foster increased public participation in the disarmament process.

Canadians also share the concern you describe in your report on the work of the United Nations for the "vast and tragic humanitarian problems" in Indochina. It is our hope that your efforts in recent months, including the conference in Geneva, will spur the international community into action to end this deplorable situation. The gratification one can realize from the substantial humanitarian response, in Canada and elsewhere, to the plight of the unfortunate refugees is insignificant in comparison to the horror with which one must view these tragic events and their consequences.

Again in Indochina, the international community is dismayed by the tragic famine now afflicting the entire Kampuchean people. From the outset, Canada has strongly supported UNICEF and the ICRC* in their efforts to establish an international relief operation for Kampuchea. To this end, Canada has made an initial contribution of \$5 million to the UNICEF/ICRC program. Apart from a response to the urgent humanitarian concerns, Canada will support any initiative to seek a political solution through negotiations to the whole Indochina problem.

Canada is pleased to note in your report that you consider there have been positive developments during the past year to improve the effectiveness of the United Nations in the field of human rights. Canada participated actively in debates in UN fora and will continue to do so. I am particularly pleased to note your call for suggestions to strengthen the contribution of the Secretariat in this field. In my speech to the General Assembly, I proposed there be established the position of an Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights. It is my firm hope that the General Assembly will support the need for effective action in this area. Much is to be done and we must have the means to do it.

Finally, I wish to reiterate what I have said is the greatest task facing the UN for the remainder of this century-- to solve the problem of poverty; thereby providing enough material goods to ensure health and dignity to all. Canada will continue to give close attention to the efforts of the UN as it strives to reach this goal.

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*International Committee of the Red Cross.

I was particularly pleased during my recent visit to New York to speak to the General Assembly to have been able to review with you issues of concern to Canadians and to the world community.

I pledge our cooperation to work with you, Mr. Secretary-General, in the furtherance of the aims of the Charter.