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STATEMENT BY DR. MARK MACGUIGAN,
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS OF CANADA,
AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE
11TH SPECIAL SESSION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY,
NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 15, 1980

"THE GLOBAL NEGOTIATIONS AND
THE INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY"

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Distinguished Delegates,

It has been almost three weeks since I last had the great honour to address this Assembly. Then, we were embarking with hope on the first steps of this important Special Session. Now, with mixed emotions, and I know physical exhaustion by many, we are seeing it draw to a close.

I have come here in this closing phase in order to demonstrate personally the importance Canada attaches to the Session and to the issues it has faced. I would also like to pay tribute to all those, Delegates and Secretariat alike, who have laboured with such intensity and dedication over past weeks. Although all our hopes have not been met, although compromises by definition never satisfy the goals of everyone; we must always bear in mind that this Session is part of a longer term process -- where the objectives are not the drafting of words but the instigation of action. Indeed, it seems to me that, sealed in negotiating fora, we run the risk of becoming overwhelmed by artificialities -- and of forgetting that huge global problems remained unsolved. It is not surprising that the world's poor do not always understand the intricacies of our verbal exchanges.

Mr. President, I, like I am sure, all other Delegates, am particularly disappointed that the Session could not reach total agreement on procedures to launch the Global Negotiations. While I fully realize that genuine differences of principle were involved, I regret that, in a spirit of compromise, these differences could not all be bridged. I would like to compliment, however, all those who sought to build that bridge, including our Canadian Ambassador, in his role as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole. But, as I said earlier, this is part of a larger process. I therefore have to hope that the nations here will gather up their strength once more and make a renewed effort in the coming months to complete the bridge between them. Through compromise and dedication, I believe this can be done. For the sake of all of us, I believe it must be.

Mr. President, the other major aspect of this Special Session has been the effort to agree on a New International Development Strategy. We, like others, are therefore very pleased that agreement has been reached on this important document--a document which can serve as a benchmark for the efforts of the global community over the coming decade. Those who have laboured hard and long to achieve this success deserve our deep appreciation. Canada believes that the strategy can and should stand on its own merits. I appreciate that during the negotiations the section on official development assistance became the symbolic centrepiece of such

a document. When I spoke to this Assembly three weeks ago, I did not specifically address the question of aid volume. However, under the positive influence of this Special Session, we have intensified our examination of the issue in Canada and I am now in a position to make the following statement.

As a result of Cabinet deliberations in recent days, the Government of Canada has decided to reverse the trend of the last few years under which Canadian official development assistance was declining as a proportion of our GNP. We shall now move upwards once again and our ODA will reach a level of 0.5 percent of GNP by the middle of the decade. Our intention thereafter is to accept the need to reach an ODA level of 0.7 percent of GNP by the end of the decade and we shall employ all our best efforts to reach this objective. With these comments in mind, I wish to state that Canada is prepared to support paragraph 23 in the International Development Strategy concerning the ODA target for developed countries.

Mr. President, let me, in conclusion, express my thanks to you for your guidance at this Session, and to the Secretary-General for the stimulating ideas he put forward at the Economic and Social Council, and which are to be considered at the 35th Session of the General Assembly. And, finally, may I thank all Delegations for the efforts they have made over recent weeks to point us in the direction of a better world. Let us use these final hours to pledge ourselves to make ever greater efforts in the future.

Thank you.