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NOTES FOR A SPEECH BY THE  
HONOURABLE ALLAN J. MACEACHEN,  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
AT THE OPENING OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR, WEDNESDAY,  
SEPTEMBER 4, 1974 28

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On behalf of the Government of Canada, it is my great pleasure to welcome you here this afternoon as you formally commence your United Nations International Seminar dedicated to developing better mechanisms to achieve equality between women and men throughout the world.

It is not an easy task that you have accepted on behalf of your countries. But it is a challenge which must be met if we are to move closer to that universal goal set out in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights ..

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Equal opportunity for both men and women, without discrimination of any kind.

This Seminar is a necessary step in that direction and Canada is pleased to be home to the first major gathering of countries leading into International Women's Year.

I am pleased to welcome Mrs. Helvi Sipilä to Canada today, not only in her role as Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations, but also in her capacity as Secretary-General for International Women's Year.

Canada may have been chosen to host this Seminar because we have had such wide and diverse activities and programmes, both in government and the private sector, centred around the status of women.

In Canada, it was concerned women, from all walks of life, who first spoke up on their own behalf - and spoke with reason, clarity and a wealth of irrefutable statistics to prove that equality in all facets of Canadian life had not been achieved. From this impetus came the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, which in turn led to those advisory organizations which counsel our provincial and federal governments so well towards achieving true equality.

In the last Parliament the Government of Canada introduced legislative changes in an Omnibus Bill dealing with the status of women. That bill and other similar legislative changes have high priority with the present Government in its future legislative programmes.

When you are discussing the current machinery in your up-coming sessions, I am sure that these legislative changes will be fully explained so I will not dwell upon them now. I will say, though, that the Government of Canada is actively dedicated to the principle and to the practice of equality between women and men in all aspects of Canadian life.

With this in mind, we have formulated extensive action plans for 1975. These plans include the creation of a national, general awareness campaign to make both women and men sensitive to the need for equality; co-ordinating various projects coming from other federal departments as well as individuals and organizations in the private sector;

sponsoring one national and four regional conferences which will be oriented to problem solving. Extra monies have been made available to fund a wide variety of projects and programmes.

We believe that if we are to reach our proper potential as a nation we must be able to give our citizens not only the choice to be what they want to be but the opportunity as well.

We also believe that 1975 should be looked upon only as a beginning for all of us. It is the year to look at what we have done or haven't done; to assess where we are now; where we should be going. It might be described as the launch-pad year. It might be Vista '75 - where we set national and international goals - both short and long range - to give women and men not only equal rights of choice but also equal opportunity for the attainment of such choices.

You have major challenges ahead of you here in this Seminar as you attempt to establish various kinds of machinery to help you achieve this equality of choice and opportunity suitable to your individual countries. I hope that Canada can contribute to your deliberations. I know we shall learn much.

On behalf of the Government of Canada, I bid you welcome and wish you well in your endeavours. Much of what you do here may have a decisive influence on the equality of the individual throughout the world over the next decade - and perhaps beyond.

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