



news release

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QUELLET OUTLINES CANADIAN PRIORITIES FOR UN REFORM

In Canada's address to the 49th annual session of the United Nations General Assembly, Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet today called on the world community to give the UN the tools and powers necessary to carry out its global mandate.

"As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the UN, we must ensure it has modern and flexible methods of management which will permit the organization to respond more efficiently to the demands of our time," said Mr. Ouellet.

In his speech, Mr. Ouellet outlined five main priorities for UN reform that the Government of Canada will actively pursue:

Strengthening the UN system's capacity for preventive action: Mr. Ouellet called for regular Summit meetings of the UN Security Council to consider evolving threats to peace and security. In addition, he said that the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) should conduct periodic public hearings, so it can identify and deal with the root economic and social causes of many conflicts. Mr. Ouellet added that any strategy to prevent armed conflict must include concrete disarmament measures.

Reviewing the UN's economic and social activities: Mr. Ouellet called for a rethinking and reform of the role and mandate of all Bretton Woods institutions, with close attention to the need to reduce duplication.

Strengthening the UN's rapid intervention capability: Mr. Ouellet announced that Canada will conduct a thorough study of the proposal for a standing UN force, drawing on the advice of international experts from around the world. He also announced that the former military base at Cornwallis, Nova Scotia, will soon open as a centre devoted to research and training in peacekeeping. The centre will be named after former Canadian Prime Minister and Nobel Prize Laureate Lester B. Pearson.

Improving the function of UN decision-making bodies: Mr. Ouellet said that Canada will work actively on negotiations to enlarge the Security Council to reflect current international realities. The Security Council must modify its methods, increase transparency and be more open to the viewpoints of non-members, especially countries which contribute peacekeeping troops.

Putting the UN on a sound financial footing: Canada has called for a review of UN budgetary procedures to make them more transparent and simple.

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