

CANADIAN DELEGATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
(FIFTEENTH SESSION)

TEXT OF ADDRESS: ADMISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

PRESS RELEASE NO. 3

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ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK CITY,  
OCTOBER 7, 1960

Mr. President:

In company with the other members of the Commonwealth, I am very pleased to congratulate and warmly welcome Nigeria on its admission to the United Nations. It is a most fortunate and happy circumstance that the distinguished Prime Minister of that country and his Cabinet colleagues have been able to be present here in the Assembly on this great occasion.

I think it most appropriate that I should recall the record of Nigeria's progress towards independence. This record reflects the responsibility and high statesmanship shown by the Nigerian leaders and the harmony and cooperation existing between Nigeria and the United Kingdom: these two countries together have thus contributed much to the United Nations and indeed to the world.

In extending our welcome to Nigeria, Canada offers its sympathetic interest and affirms its faith in Nigeria's future as a great African state and as a staunch supporter of the United Nations.

It must be a source of justifiable pride to the people of Nigeria that the transformation from colony to statehood has been accomplished in an atmosphere of dignity and goodwill reaching its culmination last Saturday on Independence Day. The Canadian Delegation to that celebration has sent back a glowing account of the occasion.

On achieving independence it happens that Nigeria has chosen to remain within the Commonwealth. This is an important event in the post-war evolution of the Commonwealth association of free and



independent nations. This is indeed a further development of the pattern which was established almost a hundred years ago in the period of Canada's evolution to independence within the Commonwealth.

In the United Nations all countries have an opportunity of expressing the concern of their peoples to promote the objectives of the Charter and countries such as Nigeria and other middle Powers have a particularly important contribution to make.

This is a time when unusually heavy demands are being placed on the leadership of the African states. Nigeria is fortunate in having statesmen, legislators and administrators whose personal qualities, training and experience will enable them to serve her so well. Nigeria also has the population and the resources to enable it to maintain and further develop its strength and stability.

The voices of the independent states of Africa, to which Nigeria's is now added, will be heard with growing attention in this General Assembly and in other meetings of the United Nations. This will be a fitting reflection of Africa's increasing importance in international affairs.

To meet the varying needs of its national life, Nigeria has adopted a federal system not unlike our own in Canada. We are aware of the complexities of such a constitution and of the problem of reconciling national unity with diversity.

Canada has already established close links with Nigeria. Last April, in order to establish a firm foundation for future relations with independent Nigeria, Canada appointed a representative in Lagos who, on Independence Day, became our High Commissioner in that capital. From time to time the Government and people of Canada have been very happy to welcome to our country a number of eminent Nigerian leaders. The Canadian Government looks forward to the opportunities for co-operation with the Government of Nigeria which the United Nations and the Commonwealth associations will open to us. The admission of this newest nation to United Nations membership is a step which today we are all marking with the warmest enthusiasm and the highest expectation.

