



Statements and Speeches

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THE UNITED NATIONS' PLACE IN WORLD AFFAIRS

An Address by the Honourable Mark MacGuigan, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the Thirty-sixth Regular Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, September 21, 1981

Foremost in my thoughts, as I again have the great honour of addressing this Assembly, are the enormous hopes that the world's peoples have had for this organization. These hopes have constantly had to confront the grave problems and dangers which continue to threaten world peace and security and to divide the nations of the world. But I am also conscious of the accomplishments of the United Nations in the last 40 years in advancing some of our common aspirations. There is progress towards greater equity in economic opportunity. We have avoided generalized world conflict. Appalling wars have occurred, but they have been contained. The UN role in these achievements is especially significant when we consider the limitations we, as member states, have placed on its capacity to act. I congratulate our Secretary-General for his own tireless efforts over the years.

I wish particularly to place in review today the notion of the UN's place in world affairs because I am very conscious of the fact that it is almost 20 years exactly since one of his [the Secretary-General] forerunners, Dag Hammarskjöld, was killed — in the service of world peace and of our organization.

The sort of world problems of 20 years ago are a gauge for measuring how far we have come, when indeed we have come any distance at all, in our search for the truly better world we were then after. A simple judgment is not easy. The world was dangerous then and it is dangerous now. But some of the dangers today are different than they were in 1961. It requires adaptation on the part of the member states of this organization to deal with them. We are entitled to ask if it is not because of difficulties in adapting the organization to change, as well as the restrictions we have placed on the organization, that the UN's impact on world problems has not been greater.

Not all of today's dangers are different. Sadly, some of the problems then are still with us today — white minority-domination in South Africa, for example, and its continued occupation of Namibia, or the seemingly intractable problems of the Middle East. Others have appeared to work their way back into our preoccupations, such as features of East-West competition which for a time had receded from the forefront of our attention.

But whatever the problems, there is a constant need to adapt to change. As I emphasized here last year, change is natural and inevitable. Our greatest challenge is to adapt to that change, not to resist it.

Many of us here are meliorists, who hold that we can encourage change for the better

The challenge
of change

and that the role of this organization is central to the promotion of a better life for all the world's inhabitants. But even if we were not, we would still wish this organization to be effective in dealing with the problems which are within its mandate and in changing to cope with threats in the world today.

Dag Hammarskjold died in 1961, along with other devoted members of the UN Secretariat to whom I pay homage, in an attempt to assist the progress of decolonization in Africa, to preserve the territorial integrity of a newly-independent state, and to resist the designs of countries and interests from there and elsewhere who, for reasons of self-interest or nostalgia, meant to subvert the changes which were taking place. I think that Hammarskjold died with a vision of the UN's peacemaking and peacekeeping capability which was resisted then and which has been resisted since. But at least the process of political decolonization which seized our attention in those years has now been virtually completed. And while I ask myself how many newly-independent states enjoy today the sort of economic and political security and opportunity which they so bravely expected at the outset of their struggle for independence, it is perhaps illusory to tie their development to the notion of national independence. Self-determination, yes; but in 1981, we are much more deeply conscious of our global interdependence: the interdependence of states, of economies, of peoples, and of dangers.

Need for global negotiating process

Economically, our interdependence is more authentically reciprocal. Twenty years ago, the economic relationships between North and South were much more those of the classical form of colonial dependency. The idea that most industrialized countries of the world would by now be purchasing 30 and 40 per cent of their imported manufactured goods in developing countries would have seemed far-fetched in 1961. Indeed, this interdependence in trade is an increasingly important feature of our view of international economic affairs. Its reflection in international decision-making is necessary. This, as well as our concern for equity in opportunity, helps to explain why Canada is a strong supporter of the need for a global negotiating process.

There has been remarkable progress in the economic development of many developing countries since 1961. But for many in the world, the basic conditions of life are just as impoverished now as they were then. The apparent inability to aid these people in the dimensions required is an indictment we must accept. But, sadly, we must also accept that the economic expectations many held for the world in 1961, and for the industrialized countries in particular, were exaggerated. Were these years of unprecedented boom an aberration? Do we need to live now with diminished expectations for growth in the future? If so, it is our obligation to find ways to deal with world problems within the limits of a more stringent environment now than in 1961 and to redouble our efforts, with discipline and dedication, to direct our attentions to where they are really vitally needed.

True non-alignment

Interdependence and its relationship to self-determination is a global political, as well as economic, reality. We are all neighbours, and strategically so. Twenty years ago, the East-West strategic focus was mainly on Europe. Today, the risk of confrontation between the superpowers in areas normally considered to be part of the Third World is also enhanced. There is a risk of aggravating problems already anguishing enough in

terms of the turbulence and fragility of the conditions of underdevelopment and conflict indigenous to the regions in question. I call for a look backward to those contemporaries of Hammarskjold who saw in non-alignment an opportunity for developing countries to concentrate on the problems before them without the threat of interference in their affairs from more powerful countries intent on subverting their assets to their own purposes. I say that true non-alignment is not only consistent with interdependence, but more necessary because of it.

Is it possible that in the last 20 years the nature of East-West tension has changed because the Soviet Union is today a military superpower with a capability of intervention which ranges far and wide? This capability can constitute a threat to world peace as well as to the non-alignment of countries as long as it is the instrument — in Afghanistan, as well as in Kampuchea — of cynical "realpolitik". Let us recognize that if the strategic interests of great powers are now in fact interdependent with events in the Third World, then it calls above all for great restraint on all our parts.

Call for more
meaningful UN

All these circumstances in 1981 call for a UN which is more meaningful and more relevant to global concerns and events, not less. As the challenges to all of us increase in complexity and urgency, the need for more sophisticated, agile and responsive instruments to meet them grows apace. The problems of the rest of the century and beyond englobe the ecology and use of our land, our space, and our seas, as well as the security of peoples and their rising expectations in a world more concentrated through technology — for instance, the military applications of nuclear technology. For example, in 1961, most countries here were consoled by progress being made in negotiating a nuclear test-ban treaty. It looked then as if we were headed towards a halt in the arms race. It was a brief illusion. Today, it is one of the most unequivocally disturbing features of international life, and indeed of our interdependence, that the dangers of nuclear war are now even greater. Nuclear proliferation threatens on two axes — the horizontal spread of nuclear weapons to previously non-nuclear-weapons states, and the vertical amassing of even greater numbers of weapons by the superpowers. I urge in the name of all sanity that this danger be recognized and resisted.

We must enable the institutions of the UN to be more productive, not less, and we must encourage all countries to participate actively in the pursuit of solutions in these institutions. In doing so, we can demonstrate that we wish to make them relevant and productive for the general benefit, adapted to the shape of the world today. Many of my remaining remarks are directed to prospects for development in countries which were still colonies 20 years ago and this reflects the interdependence of our interests and purposes today. But the political and economic problems of the world intersect and interact. It is important that our organization adapt itself as well through the greater sharing in the exercise of power and responsibility. Can we not ask ourselves if some of the notions of Dag Hammarskjold with regard to a stronger UN in the interests of world peace and security, cannot today be seen as more reasonable than they were 30 years ago? It is my view that they are certainly every bit as necessary.

Afghanistan

Surely, the continued occupation of Afghanistan by foreign military forces is an

example of precisely the sort of threat to world peace and security which the UN was meant to prevent. The courage and determination of the resistance is an ennobling assertion of the human spirit against the machinery of military oppression, but the tragic facts reflect a basic fault in the notion of collective security: when a powerful country wishes to ignore UN decisions, it will feel free to do so unless its actions remain the object of continued international attention. The continued presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan is an affront to the principles of this organization.

I call on the Soviet government to honour those principles and also the ideals of international conduct which the Soviet Union itself is pledged to follow. I ask that it respond positively to international efforts, including re-establishing a truly independent and non-aligned government in Afghanistan — a government which can reflect without outside interference the real will of the Afghan people.

Kampuchea

As the countries of the area have emphasized, the situation in Kampuchea is another such threat to peace and security. There have also been the beginnings of an attempt to confront the political issues at the root of the Kampuchean problem. We now know what a resolution of the problem must involve: a cease-fire on the ground; the supervised withdrawal of foreign troops; UN-supervised free elections and appropriate measures to ensure that elections are not disrupted by armed Kampuchean factions. Canada supports these proposals made at the international conference on Kampuchea which appear to provide necessary guarantees to all of the parties involved in the conflict. We support as well the establishment of an *ad hoc* committee to investigate and implement what is needed for the re-establishment of self-determination for the proud people of Kampuchea. We urge the member states of this organization to take this opportunity to settle their tragic situation and to promote at last a durable peace in Southeast Asia.

The self-determination sought by patriots of both Afghanistan and Kampuchea is one of the historic themes of the UN. It has been a central focus of the non-aligned movement, of which both Afghanistan and Kampuchea are members. It was also 20 years ago this month that the first meeting of the movement was held in Belgrade. I salute what the movement has done to advance the rights of newly-emerging countries.

Belize

Today, this ideal of self-determination is celebrated with the attainment of independence by Belize. This is an achievement for the UN in which Canada takes particular satisfaction as a long-time co-sponsor of UN resolutions on the subject. While Canada is disappointed that talks between the United Kingdom, Belize, and Guatemala have not led to the resolution of all outstanding issues, we are encouraged that there is a real commitment on the part of all parties to the promotion of peace in the region, which must include a final agreement on Belize. We are confident that the governments of Belize and Guatemala will settle the issues between them in a peaceful and durable manner.

Southern Africa

But if the independence of Belize represents an event to celebrate, how depressing it is to contemplate again on the agenda of this General Assembly the same issues

affecting Southern Africa that this organization has been pronouncing itself on for decades. I was speaking earlier of the dynamics of change in human affairs, and of the futility of resisting the strength of human aspiration for self-determination. But in South Africa, in 1981, resistance to change has increased. I have no doubt that justice will come for the victims of racism in South Africa, for the majority, whose human dignity is abused in an affront to us all. I sympathize with the impatience of those who shudder at abiding any longer — for another generation, another decade or two — the oppression of *apartheid*. But I counsel wisdom in choosing methods of promoting the freedom of these people for we must not let differences over tactics serve to weaken our unity in that purpose.

In Namibia, too, the intransigence of the South African government remains the sole obstacle to a negotiated settlement. Our only goal is to enable the Namibian people to gain their independence at last and the right to a free and fair election in which all Namibians can take part under UN supervision. Canada supports unconditionally Security Council Resolution 435 and the UN Settlement Plan, and we have been active, particularly in the "contact group" and with African states, in pursuing this goal.

Middle East

In the Middle East, there is also conflict, and at its centre the Arab-Israeli dispute, as old as the UN itself. We cannot afford further delay in moving towards a negotiated settlement to this generations-old conflict, in which all the interested parties must participate. Israelis and Palestinians have legitimate rights and concerns which must be taken into account. Israel's quest for security and recognized boundaries, and the right to be fully accepted by its neighbours, can be met only in a political, not a military, framework. The same holds true for the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, including their right to a homeland within a clearly-defined territory, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

I therefore urge all the parties concerned to summon the vision and will required to take decisions which are as necessary as they are difficult. Among the areas where progress is urgently needed, none is more pressing than measures to ensure that the Middle East will remain free of nuclear weapons.

Korea

Another early concern of the United Nations is the Korean peninsula. There, too, the Secretary-General is performing a useful good-offices role. We are encouraged by the recent initiatives by the Republic of Korea for dialogue and reconciliation without conditions, and for the greater integration of the peninsula into the international community.

Cyprus

The United Nations is also playing a valuable role in Cyprus where peacekeeping and peacemaking are proceeding in parallel under the Secretary-General's leadership. We hope that the approaches now being considered in negotiations between the two communities will lead to the just and lasting comprehensive settlement they both desire.

It is in Cyprus that the oldest and largest of Canada's present peacekeeping contingents is serving. Twenty-five years after the introduction of UN peacekeeping forces to world affairs, I see the Cyprus force as accomplishing an important role

Sea law agreement vital for world peace

encouraging us to believe in the notion of collection security through recourse to negotiation instead of conflict in the context of accepted principles of law.

There are also nations engaged in our attempt to advance the rule of law at the third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea. I should like to associate myself with the statement by the Secretary-General of the United Nations made at the opening of the tenth session of the Law of the Sea Conference on March 9, when he said: "Apart from the achievement of the specific objectives of this conference, I attach the highest importance to the impact which its success may have in strengthening the role of the UN in finding viable solutions to great global issues." I wish to emphasize that the conference is not merely an attempt to codify technical rules of law. It is a resource conference. It is a food conference. It is an environmental conference. It is a maritime boundary delimitation conference. It is a territorial limitation and jurisdictional conference. It is a transportation, communications and freedom-of-navigation conference. It is a conference which regulates all the uses of the oceans by humanity. Most importantly, it is a conference which provides for peaceful settlement of disputes concerning the oceans. It is, in other words, a conference dedicated to the rule of law amongst nations.

The third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea ranks in importance with the San Francisco Founding Conference of the UN itself. It represents an extremely important element in the North-South dialogue. It has significant implications for peaceful East-West relations. It touches on the interests of every state, great or small, rich or poor, coastal or land-locked. The achievement of a universal agreement on a law of the sea convention is fundamental to world peace and security.

Arms control and disarmament

Of course, international peace and security, as well as development, freedom, and life itself, will ultimately depend on whether we can successfully work towards arms control and disarmament. Security can be consistent with lower levels of armaments and expenditures. The coming Special Session on Disarmament must point the way to more concrete progress than in recent years if credibility is to be maintained. Deliberations on disarmament at this General Assembly can be of crucial importance in preparation. The remarkable consensus reached in 1978 needs reaffirmation and further direction. It is true that the international climate is less favourable today. At the same time, we cannot ignore the growing impatience of the world's peoples with the lack of progress towards verifiable arms limitation and disarmament agreements. Our efforts on their behalf should take into account the situation as it is in covering realistic proposals which have some substantive chance to effect change. The Canadian government recently reaffirmed the validity of the concept of the strategy of suffocation mentioned in the final document of the First Special Session on Disarmament. Embracing that strategy are Canada's priorities on preparations for the Second Special Session. They are: (a) to encourage the continuation of the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks process; (b) to promote the realization of a multilateral comprehensive test-ban treaty; (c) to assist in the preparation of a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons and on their destruction; (d) to promote the evolution of an effective non-proliferation regime based on the Non-Proliferation Treaty; and (e) to participate in negotiations to limit and reduce conventional forces. Canada is committed to breaking the pattern of madness which spiralling rearmament repre-

sents, and these priorities will guide our endeavours to fulfil this commitment.

I have spoken about the far-reaching quests for peace, self-determination and development. These are the forces by which pervasive change can be channelled in positive directions. They are as new as today and as old as humankind, constants amid change. They have found eloquent expression in the ideals of our Charter, and I urge our re-dedication to them.

Human rights

But there is none so pervasive as the quest for human dignity for the individual and his rights. That is why the United Nations enshrined in its Charter, as a primary objective, the promotion and encouragement of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. There has been the development of several important human rights instruments since — most noticeably, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In its stewardship of implementing the provisions of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, there is the expert and responsible role of the Human Rights Committee. It is as an example of the ability of the international community to promote internationally-recognized standards.

The Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights is an equally significant covenant needing serious and expert review.

There are areas in which international standards have yet to be established. We applaud the placing before this Assembly for adoption the Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion.

But while we welcome the continuing development of international human rights standards, we are deeply conscious that despite these, the grossest of abuses occur; the lives, freedom and integrity of innocent persons are constantly swept aside in the name of one cause, or power struggle, or another. If the United Nations provides relief unhesitatingly to the victims of natural disasters, how can we do less when the crises are man-made?

The United Nations has the means to respond. It can, for example, employ the good offices of the Secretary-General; it can provide for the urgent dispatch of a special rapporteur or a mission of enquiry. All that is needed is the will to act in providing protection for those individuals or groups whose situation has become perilous in situations of social breakdown.

On the subject of human rights and massive exodus, Canada welcomed the adoption of its proposal to appoint a special rapporteur. We trust that the experience of Prince Sadruddin Khan in that role will lead to adoption of a report which provides insights into how the United Nations' organizations and member states can together prevent refugee situations from reaching existing proportions. We believe that report should provide an impartial basis for examining broader aspects of international refugee problems including, for example, the proposed initiative by the Federal Republic of Germany regarding international guidelines for preventing massive flows of refugees.

Even in more tranquil situations, there is work to be done. This is the International Year of Disabled Persons, to promote the rights of more than 500 million disabled people throughout the world to full participation and equality in a barrier-free world.

And there is the position of women, in all countries, and the need to improve their condition, socially and politically, and to promote the equality of women with men. An important step in this direction is the recent entry into force of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

New states

But if collective world concern for individual human rights, and for organized efforts to promote the rights of women and the specifically disadvantaged are important recent phenomena, the emergence during the last 30 years of some 100 sovereign states must be counted as one of the most significant changes the world has ever seen. Dag Hammarskjöld was of course centrally involved in the process of assisting these new states to enter into the life of this institution. This was a period of birth and hope. But for many of those new states, perhaps for most, this hope was quickly tempered by the economic realities which faced them.

One reality which was evident immediately to the new states was that any economic interdependence which then applied was heavily skewed on the side of dependence and vulnerability for them. It was an asymmetrical relationship. The developing countries were acutely aware of this, but the developed world was not. That has now changed. I think that the change in perception on the part of developed countries towards the reality of global interdependence is of great significance, even a source of hope.

Developing-countries and world trade

The growing realization that to an increasing extent our economic futures are linked, can spur us towards solutions. The Brandt report has, I think, contributed in this regard. In particular, there has been an increased awareness of the contribution of the developing countries to the over-all world economy. It is now projected that between 1980 and 1990, developing countries will account for more than a quarter of the increase in world trade. These statistics mask, of course, important differences among the various developing countries most involved as well as the relative impact of these changes on individual economies. But they do indicate that developing countries are moving closer to the centre of the world economic stage.

Interdependence also has a price. It tends to make all nations more vulnerable to shocks from the outside and from forces beyond the control of national governments. It is therefore of paramount importance that the international institutions which provide the frameworks for the international economic system function effectively. If they do not, if they become deadlocked and divided along bloc lines, or if they become hostage to narrow interests, then the international economy will suffer. Under these circumstances, interdependence becomes a liability and all states suffer.

Inflation, high interest rates and sluggish growth pose real problems for the industrialized countries. The constraints on export growth and financing are mounting in the middle-income developing countries. It is, however, the low-income countries – particularly, the least developed – which are the most vulnerable and whose prospects

are the bleakest. Whether oil shocks or high interest-rate shocks, they have suffered most.

Energy and
food needs

The rising prices and diminishing supply of conventional petroleum reserves have had a major impact on all of us, but the impact of the two oil shocks of the Seventies has had a disproportionate effect on the developing countries, setting back the development plans of many of them. Canada agrees that a high priority in international action should be accorded to their energy needs. It is because energy is central to development that Canada supports the expansion of World Bank energy lending, including through a new energy affiliate if this were eventually feasible, to assist developing countries in their energy programs.

In Canada, we have responded to this need by creating a new development assistance arm of our national oil company — Petro-Canada International — devoted to aiding oil-importing developing countries in the mobilization of their own energy resources, particularly hydrocarbons. Effort and imagination must also be used to seek out ways of assisting developing countries in non-petroleum sources of energy. The recent Conference on New and Renewable Energy Sources was important in this respect, but represented a single step on a long and difficult road.

Just as Canada's economic structure and expertise favours development assistance in the energy area, so we also intend to make a major contribution to helping improve agricultural production in developing countries. While international trade in food products has increased dramatically in recent decades, many nations which were previously self-sufficient in staple products — and even significant exporters of them — have become today reliant on food imports, particularly food grains. There is real prospect of a food crisis in the 1980s and urgent international attention is needed on this problem.

Trade answer
to poverty

I've spoken of energy and food — areas where Canada can make a unique contribution — but I would like also to say a brief word about trade. For it is perhaps trade which, in the long run, offers the best promise of escape from the wheel of poverty for many countries.

Developing countries have seized important new opportunities to increase trade among themselves. But northern markets continue to be crucial, and future prospects for expanding North-South trade will depend to a large extent on the ability of industrial countries to develop effective adjustment strategies which can maintain a reasonable rate of economic growth employment. In fact, the relative significance of North-South trade has grown in recent years compared with trade just among the industrialized countries. Now, a number of the most advanced developing countries represent the potential trade partnerships of greatest opportunity for many developed countries. All countries will benefit from an open, universal international trading system, and Canada will continue to promote this goal. This would be our focus at the proposed ministerial meeting of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade in 1982.

The export prospects of developing countries are also an increasingly important factor

in the health of the international payments system and of international banking. For the foreseeable future, developing countries will continue to need substantial external finance, whether in the form of private investment, of commercial loans or concessional loans and grants. While private banking continues to play a major role in recycling, the international financial institutions must be increasingly involved. We support renewed effort by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in this direction. But for many of the low-income countries, the ability to participate in the expansion of world trade is limited; so is their access to commercial credit. If poverty in these countries is to be attacked — and social justice demands this — then greater amounts of concessional assistance must be directed to them. There is no way around this issue: development assistance is vital, urgently needed, and the world is not providing enough of it.

**Progress made
at Paris con-
ference**

The recent Paris Conference on the Least Developed was an important contribution to progress. Widespread consensus was achieved among the international community for the setting of objectives to be pursued by recipients and for the projections from donors of significant additional official development assistance in real terms during this decade. Taken together these hold promise for advancing substantially the development of states most in need.

The substantial new program of action adopted in Paris not only set an important course for achieving progress with respect to the least developed but provides a guide for approaching vitally needed interaction between developed and developing countries on a range of subjects on the North-South agenda. Key portions of the substantial new program of action became known as the "Canadian compromise". Canada was pleased to be associated with these vital conclusions because they demonstrated that constructive agreement can be reached on a subject of vital importance to the developing. In keeping with the role my country played in Paris, I urge that the momentum and techniques generated there be pursued during this Assembly and during other international meetings addressing relations between developing and developed.

**Canada increases
pledge**

As a result of the Paris achievement, which Canada helped to create and in the context of translating that achievement into concrete reality, I am pleased to announce that Canada will devote 0.15 per cent of gross national product as official development assistance to the least developed in the coming years.

This pledge is in the context of the announcement I made at the eleventh Special Session on Development last year that Canada would reverse the trend of previous years and increase our official development assistance to ensure we are soon at 0.5 per cent of GNP as part of an effort to reach 0.7 per cent by the end of the decade. I am pleased that we have remained on that upward track.

I spoke earlier of the fact that interdependence means that international economic co-operation is not a luxury. It is a vital necessity without which interdependence becomes a liability.

We must look towards deeper global economic co-operation, yet solutions to world

economic problems will not always be globalized ones. The progress made at the high-level meeting of developing countries in Caracas last May is a case in point. Relations with developing countries were the major focus of a number of high-level consultations among industrialized countries — in particular the June ministerial meeting of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development and the Ottawa Summit. I want to take this opportunity to briefly report to the Assembly on the latter meeting.

Ottawa Summit

The Summit devoted considerable time to the issue of economic relations between developed and developing countries and, in the communiqué, the leaders agreed on a joint statement reflecting these discussions. They underlined an appreciation of the magnitude of the problems and a common readiness to help respond to them. Overall, the message to our developing-country partners signalled the following:

- respect for independence and support for genuine non-alignment;
- commitment to co-operate in a spirit of mutual interest and interdependence;
- support for closer integration of developing countries into the international economic system, as well as support for their efforts to promote development within the framework of their own social values and traditions.

Moreover, we sought at the Summit to address the key problems of energy, food, trade and finance in a positive and constructive way. We pledged to maintain substantial and, in many cases, growing levels of official development assistance, the major portion of which will be directed to poorer countries. Of signal importance was our affirmation at the Summit to participate in preparations for a process of global negotiations. It has been encouraging to me that both developed and developing countries have expressed their appreciation of the results of the Ottawa Summit.

Another important initiative in North-South relations this year will be the Summit at Cancun. We hope that the Cancun Summit will foster understanding of the key North-South issues and give political impetus to their resolution in whatever fora may be appropriate. We do not see the Summit as a substitute for global negotiations — no non-universal forum can be. But we do see it as a catalyst for them. And while the nature of the North-South Summit precludes participation by all of the interested parties, we welcome the link with the United Nations as represented by the presence at Cancun of Secretary-General Waldheim.

While admitting the value of summits, however, universally-determined multilateral agreements remain fundamental to our search for effective solutions to global problems. For this reason, a large degree of consensus has been reached on the launching of global negotiations. While admitting that compromise on all sides will be necessary in that process, I believe there is new willingness to face this challenge. Preparatory discussions will resume during this session, and I pledge Canada's determination to work for a successful outcome.

Task force on North-South relations

Within Canada during the past year, we have taken a number of steps to enable us to play a more active and constructive role in international co-operation in these vital areas. A Parliamentary Task Force on North-South Relations tabled a major and

invaluable report. It advocated strongly that Canada continue to play an active North-South role, based on the principles of mutual benefit and humanitarianism, and made a series of constructive recommendations relating to energy, finance, trade, food and development assistance. Our government has been pleased with the broad support the report has received and with the increased public awareness fostered by the work of the Task Force.

Parallel to the work of the Parliamentary Task Force, and drawing on it, the Canadian government also conducted a review of North-South policy. We have affirmed a number of fundamental issues, including a recognition of interdependence, the need for harmonization of external and domestic policies which have an impact on developing countries, the need to employ a variety of instruments to meet the needs of developing countries, and greater integration of the South in the international economic system.

Call to action

As nations we must acknowledge that not only our economic concerns, but many of our political, social and economic problems are fundamentally international in character. In a world of constant change, the problem of reconciling the fact of interdependence with the imperative of self-determination is one of the biggest challenges facing policy-makers today. But our recognition of the complexities of interdependence, and of its consequences in all aspects of national life, must not be a cause for despair, but rather a call to action. We must take up the challenge of adapting and developing international institutions, and our national perspectives, to these new realities and to the reality of change itself.

Institutions themselves, no matter how they are strengthened, are not enough. What is essential is the determination — on the part of all countries — to make these instruments effective. Governments, whatever their particular national perspective, must summon the resolve necessary to confront the pressing international problems of today. To do this requires a shared confidence that, only through international co-operation, can we obtain security, stability and justice in the world.

Canadians have that confidence. We shall dedicate our efforts, not only here in the United Nations, but wherever these problems are addressed, to working to overcome these problems of international scope which touch the lives of us all.