

Statement

Secretary of
State for
External Affairs



Déclaration

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d'État aux
Affaires
extérieures

90/19

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

CLOSING SPEECH

BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOE CLARK,

31ST ANNUAL MEETING OF THE

INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

MONTREAL, QUEBEC

April 4, 1990.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The thirty-first annual meeting of the Inter-American Development Bank and the fifth annual meeting of the Inter-American Investment Corporation have both been productive. We had all hoped that these meetings in Montreal would launch a new decade of progress and pragmatism in the Americas, and I believe they have.

The Bank has begun reforms which can make it an effective and respected instrument of development. If that spirit of reform is respected, it can also play a larger role of leadership in the hemisphere. The Bank can become the one institution which combines the authority to express common purpose, and the means to achieve real change.

As Chairman, I intend to participate actively in this evolution of the IDB and I know I can rely on the co-operation of my fellow Governors.

The meeting provided a unique opportunity for a number of members to report on the status of their economic reform programs. I know that both the Bank and other interested institutions have found this useful and will take advantage of it to work closely with these countries as they meet the challenges ahead. Such reports are essential contributions to the ongoing dialogue on the process of structural adjustment. We would expect the Bank to play a role in tailoring its lending programs in these countries to support these economic adjustments.

Mr. President, the statements we have been privileged to hear over the past three days reflect a clear consensus in our priorities for the next year. To a remarkable degree that consensus has been re-inforced by the contributions of non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and ordinary citizens from our member countries who participated actively in the seminars that preceded our deliberations.

There has been a consistent and welcome reassurance that the important developments in Eastern Europe will not divert donor countries from their priorities and commitments in this hemisphere.

There is virtual unanimity on the importance of pragmatism as our guide as we confront our twin challenges of development and reduction of debt.

And we all recognize that the goals of development and democracy can best be met together, but that their successful marriage require us to be both sensitive and innovative.

The social standards of the Bank are clear. We all accept our over-riding obligations to the poorest of our population, and expect the Bank to achieve and respect the standard that fully 50 per cent of our lending will bring benefits to those citizens of our hemisphere most in need.

There is agreement that we must improve the situation of women in development. Our motive is not an abstract commitment to equality, but a common sense recognition of the evidence that the role of women is critical to durable development.

There is a clear acknowledgement that environmental consideration must have a growing influence on Bank decisions, and a general determination, Mr. President, to support your personal commitment to sustainable development.

Mr. President, in the past year you have begun a fundamental reform in the Bank. For this we are very appreciative. The success of the strategies we have discussed will depend upon the effective management of the Bank.

We urge you to continue the efforts to improve, simplify and strengthen the internal administrative reforms which have been identified or begun.

As a public institution, our internal process is under constant observation, both by the public and by financial institutions. The Bank's practices and policies must maintain the financial indicators expected by these financial institutions, whose partnership and confidence we require.

We must recognize that, to achieve success, the IDB cannot act alone. The problems we face are not those of the IDB, nor those of individual countries. They are a collective responsibility, and must be met in a spirit of multilateralism. A number of member countries have expressed their desire to participate more extensively in our Bank. This must be encouraged.

The role of the Committee of the Board of Governors has traditionally been limited. We have seen at this meeting that there are a variety of matters that concern all member countries. An expanded role for the Committee of the Board of Governors would enhance the multilateral aspect of the Bank and provide another opportunity for open discussions on issues of major concern to all of us.

But we must also work within the countries that we represent if we are to generate the resources needed to address our problems in a comprehensive manner.

Mr. President, I urge you, and the General Manager of the Inter-American Investment Corporation, to continue your search for private capital investment to fund specific projects in the productive sector. We must continue our search for innovative and creative forms of financing pre-investment studies if our pipeline of projects is to be strengthened.

I would like to take this final opportunity to thank the staff of the IDB for their outstanding contributions in the past week. Their work in Montreal has provided us all with a great appreciation of their talent and energy.

Another group of people who have worked tirelessly on the planning of the week's program is the Canadian Task Force. On your behalf, I thank all of them for demonstrating the high standard of Canadian hospitality.

Mr. President, we have many challenges, and our time is short. We must now move forward together to give substance to the policy directions we have seen represented these past three days. I can assure you of the continuing support of this Board of Governors over the next year, and I look forward to working with you so we might report continued success at our next meeting in Nagoya, Japan.