

Statement

Secretary of
State for
External Affairs



Déclaration

Secrétaire d'État
aux Affaires
extérieures

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**NOTES FOR AN ADDRESS BY
THE HONOURABLE BARBARA McDOUGALL,
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,
TO THE NORTH AMERICAN
MODEL UNITED NATIONS ASSEMBLY**

**TORONTO, Ontario
February 21, 1992**

Mr. Lopes (President of the North American Model United Nations Board of Directors), Mr. Sayers (Secretary-General of this Assembly), distinguished visitors, UN delegates,

It is a great pleasure for me to be here this evening for the concluding dinner of this week's Assembly. The United Nations is central to Canada's foreign policy, and I personally am a great supporter of the UN and its ideals.

Your own dedication to these ideals is evident, since many of you have devoted your reading week or have cut classes to be here. Indeed, I understand that, due to university budget constraints, many of you have had to bear your own travel expenses in order to spend this week in Toronto.

But budgetary crises have almost gone hand in hand with the UN itself since its creation. In fact, circumstances were so acute near the end of 1991 that regular articles appeared in the press speculating about the Secretariat's ability to meet its December payroll.

Having said that, I am pleased to say that Canada and a number of other stalwart members followed tradition and paid our 1992 assessments in full -- before the new year.

Whatever the UN's problems -- and there are some -- it would have been a great tragedy, not just for the organization, but for the world, if it had been allowed to founder because of a lack of financial support from its members.

But this problem -- and it is a significant one -- is not merely one of short-term cash flow. The worldwide recession and its impact on the ability of all member states to pay their dues, as well as the disappearance from the political map of states such as the U.S.S.R., which used to bear significant portions of the budget, place serious limitations on the UN's ability to operate to its full potential.

There is, of course, an obligation on the successor states to the Soviet Union to pick up their fair share of the responsibility for financing the UN, and we have, in fact, urged them to do so.

There is also the obligation on all other member states who contribute to and benefit from the UN's new-found vitality to meet their past and current obligations without undue delay. I am sure that this message will not be lost on the participants in this Assembly.

Ironically, while the organization's financial stability wavers, there are increasing demands on its resources almost daily and, on the part of the public -- not just in Canada, but around the world -- there is increasing faith in the UN as an instrument for positive progress. Many of these new expectations have arisen almost directly from the fact that the UN has finally been able to play one of its originally intended roles -- that of ensuring international peace and security. Its successful actions against Iraqi aggression in Kuwait, in particular, have invited more participation from the UN in other areas.

We have witnessed significant expansion in both the size and character of UN peacekeeping exercises. Cambodia and Yugoslavia particularly

will be major challenges. But peacekeeping must remain part of the solution and not be allowed to become part of the problem. It must go hand in hand with genuine efforts to resolve the problems that give rise to a breach of the peace in the first place.

Political pressure must be brought to bear from all sides or parties in disputes. Our thinking and some of the thinking at the January Summit of the UN Security Council did address the need to define the concepts and limits of peacekeeping, whether they be preventive UN diplomacy, selective peacemaking, or a less restrictive definition of what constitutes national sovereignty.

All of these new approaches pose problems for some member states, but they must be examined if we are to avoid the current unbridled growth in operations dedicated essentially to patching up the damage after it has been done.

The Security Council Summit has tasked the Secretary-General with the development of acceptable and workable proposals, and the Canadian government pledges its full support to his efforts in this regard.

The end of the so-called bipolar world has also provided some hitherto unimaginable opportunities and successes in the field of arms control and disarmament. The UN has always been an important agent for progress in this domain.

Canada has worked tirelessly since the end of the Gulf War, particularly to help, for example, create a register of conventional weapon transfers, and we shepherded this objective through during the 46th General Assembly. The UN will continue to be a vital forum for further arms reductions, and Canada will continue to be a major contributor to the process.

We must also use this more active approach to other non-conventional threats to international peace and security -- whether those threats derive from uncontrolled damage to the environment or from economic and social inequities that are being ignored.

This summer's UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) represents an unprecedented opportunity to bring international political will to bear on threats directly affecting our own future well-being and those of our children.

The success of UNCED will depend on both leadership and commitment from major industrial powers such as the U.S. and Canada, and from developing countries as well.

So, too, must the UN meet some of the deep-seated economic problems that, for too long, have made a cruel irony of the term "developing world."

That challenge is also a part of the UN's mandate, and it is an area where depressingly little progress has been made. Again, it will require co-operation from both North and South. North/South is used colloquially for industrialized/underdeveloped countries. It's not a very appropriate term anymore, given the underdeveloped nature of the

economies in the former Soviet republics. But it will require co-operation of all those countries under the auspices of the United Nations.

Fortunately, there have been some recent encouraging signs. For example, during the 46th General Assembly in New York this fall, a successful initiative was concluded that guarantees more effective UN responses to human-made and natural disasters.

The chairman of the committee that carried out this difficult task, Sweden's UN Ambassador, Jan Eliasson, has just been named the United Nations Emergency Relief Co-ordinator.

In this new post, Ambassador Eliasson will have at his disposal a revolving fund of \$50 million to help ensure that the UN is able to respond in a more timely and effective fashion whenever grave humanitarian crises arise.

On January 15, I announced, together with Monique Landry, the Minister for External Relations and International Development, a contribution of \$2.5 million to this fund. Canada was proud to be among the first countries to announce a contribution, and we will continue to work to ensure the fund's success.

However, solving the more fundamental economic and social problems of the world will require more than \$50 million or even \$50 billion. In addition to financial resources, it will require sound and consistent government policies and pragmatic international co-operation.

The UN must find a constructive role in the economic/developmental sphere or face increasing marginalization of a growing number of nations -- its own member nations.

The UN must also address the continuing questions of human rights. And Canada can be proud of its record in ensuring that consideration of this issue, both at the General Assembly and in the Commission on Human Rights, has produced positive results. Particular cases of abuse have been identified, and rapporteurs have been dispatched when on-the-spot investigations were necessary.

The UN must also, in particular, intensify its efforts to achieve equality for women -- an essential component of human rights. Canada will continue to take a leading role in the elimination of discrimination against women through advocacy within the Commission on the Status of Women and at the General Assembly.

Canada's active encouragement of democratic development -- a key objective of our foreign policy -- through the loan of electoral officials and observers plus human rights monitors to those countries building or re-constructing democratic traditions, will work in concert with the UN's overall efforts to promote universal respect for human rights.

Peacekeeping, arms control, protection of the environment, the addressing of fundamental economic and social inequities, the

protection of human rights -- it's a long list that calls for the UN to do a fundamental reassessment of itself as well.

In that regard, I am encouraged by the firm steps already taken by the UN's new Secretary-General. In New York, in January, I had the opportunity to renew acquaintances with Dr. Boutros-Ghali in his new capacity. We had a full and fruitful discussion with a definite meeting of minds on the need to streamline the organization. This sentiment was echoed during the Security Council Summit at the end of that month.

On February 7, Dr. Boutros-Ghali announced a rationalization in the structure of the Secretariat that will result in the elimination of 14 senior positions. It is hoped that this "de-layering" will be the precursor of much more far-reaching reforms throughout the system, which will leave us with a UN with clear goals rather than a commitment to avoiding change.

One of those changes, and we are still hoping to see some positive move by Dr. Boutros-Ghali in this regard, would be to increase the number of women appointed to senior positions at the UN.

Another of the issues alluded to at the Summit was that of Security Council reform. Any changes to the membership of the Council -- when they come, as they eventually must -- should reflect current realities. But they must keep engaged those players who can make a real difference to the effectiveness of the organization.

This will not be an easy task and should not be undertaken at the expense of the efficiency and the momentum of the current Security Council. It has, in recent years, been performing with magnificent effect -- as envisaged in the Charter in 1945 -- and Canada wishes to ensure that it continues to do so.

While the problems facing the UN are both more numerous and more significant than ever before, the need to retain the viability of the organization by overcoming these challenges is also greater than ever.

Our commitment to the UN has not wavered throughout its history, and, as a result, we play a role there that is larger than our size and wealth would suggest. As John Holmes has said: "As a unilateral crusader, Canada can achieve little; as a constructive builder of coalitions, we can make a real difference."

You, in many ways, epitomize the support that Canada has always shown for this unique organization among organizations. It is also why in our current constitutional debate we must bear in mind that it is not just the future of Canada at stake, but the future of a nation -- our nation -- which has had historically a civilizing effect internationally and a real contribution to make to the world.

We count on you to continue to raise public awareness of the singular role that the United Nations can and will play in all of our lives, and of the need for all of us to become involved to ensure that it reaches its full potential for the benefit of all the citizens of the world.