Cooperative Programs

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Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Let me start off by taking the unusual step of making a public confession. This could be very much in context with the reportedly strong British background of this beautiful province. Few institutions have produced as many breast-beating confessors as the colonial British Civil Service. But I digress. As I appear before you today, I confess to a fleeting feeling of concern. This is occasioned by the assurance I have received from those who know the Canadian academic community more intimately than I, that Canadian academics, facing a diminution of research funds, will want to know only one thing from me, namely, how much can they get.

But my sense of foreboding, as I said, is only a fleeting. Like heartburn on Boxing Day, it comes and goes. For one thing, I am reasonably certain that I don't look like a philanthropist (who is generous with his own money), a bureaucrat (who dips into the kitty to spend other people's money), a banker, or even a village moneylender. For another, I have found in my visits to Canadian universities, a commitment to participation and more important, partnership in the processes of international development. I have no reason to doubt that at least the same degree of commitment exists in this university, throughout this province, and across this region of Canada. Most of all, however, I remain convinced, as I was before I made my home in Canada, that despite the reports of parochialism, prejudice, and preconception one reads from time to time, caring Canadians are not rare. This is one of the few countries, for instance, in which representatives of industry have argued strenuously for the dismantling of barriers against imports from developing countries. It is a country from which volunteers straight out of university have gone deep into the hinterland of Asia and Africa, to work as equals...
among unfamiliar and disadvantaged peoples — and with no thoughts of destabilizing them. It is a country in which some universities have done pioneering work in institutional partnership. And, let me briefly add, it was the first country to establish a research-funding institution with a uniquely developing country orientation.

Very early in its life, IDRC's international Board of Governors realized that they had to be selective about its priorities. They decided, therefore, that in seeking to fulfil its objectives, IDRC should emphasize that section of its mandate which calls for developing countries to be assisted "to build up the research capabilities, the innovative skills and the institutions required to solve their problems". With this focus, the Centre's approach has been one, in effect, of seeking to ensure that the need to conduct research, the capacity to undertake research, and the research process itself are melded into a whole in developing countries. Commenting on this approach, Jorge Sabato of the Bariloche Foundation has said:

"This, I think, is a very proper attitude. I like to be responsible for my own mistakes... I am quite happy that IDRC did not try to dictate the norms and procedures to be followed. The Centre should not determine priorities for the Third World."

It is not my task to examine or describe the contribution IDRC-funded research has made to various developing countries and regions during the past ten (10) years. To place the work and focus of the IDRC since its inception in perspective, I
should point out, however, that whatever final assessments are made of IDRC-funded research, the Centre's activities have already resulted in establishing a place for research in the development process. This is a remarkable achievement, because in many developing countries the research community has been considered remote from the hurly-burly of pain and growth. In many developing countries, the research community itself sometimes gave the impression that it was desperately trying to justify the derision. The IDRC's role is helping to change these attitudes and orientations. Such an institution, playing as significant a role as it does internationally, must have a relationship with the research community in its own national environment.

Thus, as a complement to its primary focus, IDRC has sought the assistance of Canadian researchers where such assistance was expected to enhance work being done by developing country researchers. As of September 30 this year, IDRC had funded 67 LDC-related research projects in Canada. Approximately half of them were in the agricultural and related sciences. As a result of IDRC's approach, cooperation has been established in many fields between universities and research institutions in Canada and institutions in developing countries. Several Canadian scientists have been associated with a network of developing country projects over a long period for short stretches of intensive work each time. IDRC staff have been located at Canadian universities. Young developing country researchers have been enabled to improve their skills through fellowship programs in Canada.

While the Centre's primary focus remains unchanged—and, I like to think, unchangeable—the opportunity for greater involvement by Canadian research community in international development and cooperation has been provided through the Centre's post-UNCSTD responsibility.
The United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development, the last of the megaconferences of the '70s, was a part of several international initiatives taken during the decade recently ended to outline the parameters of international cooperation in specific fields. The decision to convene UNCSTD was taken at the 7th Special Session of the UN General Assembly (devoted to an examination of international economic issues) where the compelling need to foster cooperative North-South links contribute to the research and development/science and technology component of the New International Economic Order. This process, as described by UNCSTD's Deputy Secretary-General Gresford, requires "the achievement of greater cooperation between developed and developing countries... and also the stimulation of cooperation among developing countries."

During the preparations that led to the Conference, and at UNCSTD itself, the Group of 77 developing countries made four major proposals all of which were adopted by the International community and have since been written into the Vienna Programme of Action on Science and Technology for Development. These proposals were:

**FIRST**, a major international effort to assist developing countries build up indigenous research and development/science and technology capabilities as part of the development process.

In Canada, this proposal was anticipated in 1970 by the establishment of the IDRC. Several countries have since emulated IDRC, and established institutions with a similar focus and aims.
SECOND, the establishment of a special fund with contributions totalling 2 to 4 billion dollars, to support the development of indigenous capabilities in the countries of the South.

In the course of discussion, the funding target was reduced to $250 million. An Interim Fund has since been opened under the control of the United Nations Development Fund, and some 350 project proposals for financing by the Interim Fund had been received by UNDP as of May this year. This number has been reduced by UNDP, after initial review, to around 80.

THIRD, the creation of a new Centre for Science and Technology within the UN family.

A Centre for Science and Technology for Development has now been established within the UN Secretariat as an organizationally distinct entity. The head of the Centre is Mr. Amilcar Ferrari, former Director of Brazil's National Council for Scientific and Technological Development.

FOURTH, the application by industrialized countries of a portion of their domestic research and development capacity to the solution of developing country problems, such application to be undertaken as far as possible through cooperative arrangements.
The Vienna Programme of Action urged, as well, that cooperative research and development projects should bear a number of characteristics, the most important of which were that they should:

a) accord with development priorities determined by developing countries themselves,

b) provide, as far as possible, for developing country participation, even when conducted in developed country institutions,

c) provide for joint participation and control, when conducted in developing countries, and,

d) include a training component.

The fourth of these proposals, with the inclusion of the safeguards stated, suggests a framework for North-South cooperation which should particularly interest and excite the universities where the research community of developed countries are centred, or at least where they are nurtured.

At UNCSTD, Canada responded affirmatively to the proposal for cooperative programs. The Canadian announcement made by Senator Asselin, Minister of State for the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) at the time, has never been fully reported in Canada. That's the way it is. The relevant sections therefore bear repetition:
we asked ourselves, within the context of preparations for UNCSTD, how we could respond to another long standing suggestion—the suggestion that as an industrialized country, we should apply an increased share of our own domestic research and development capacity to the solution of some of the problems facing developing countries.

I am therefore very happy to announce that the Government of Canada has decided to adopt a policy encouraging the application of our domestic research and development capabilities to the solution of problems of the developing countries. The Government has specifically stipulated that such Canadian resources should wherever possible be applied through cooperative or joint research and development ventures with organizations in developing countries or regions with the aim of enhancing their indigenous capabilities. To provide the necessary expertise, initiative, and leadership to the new programme the Government of Canada will shortly invite the IDRC to become the focal point of this new activity. We are confident that the Centre will accept this new and demanding challenge. In so inviting the IDRC to take on this additional responsibility we are conscious of the need not to divert the Centre from continuing its current emphasis on
supporting research by developing country scientists in their countries. I wish therefore to emphasize that these new activities will be supported by additional funds provided by the Government of Canada.

A target (annual) figure of about 1 per cent of official development assistance — about $12 million today — is being considered.

Later, the Government of Canada invited IDRC to serve as the focal point of the new activity. After careful deliberation, the Centre's Board of Governors accepted the invitation, on the understanding that the proposed new activity would be additional to established program activity but should maintain the principle of responsiveness to developing country needs as perceived by the LDCs themselves. A Cooperative Programs Unit has been set up as part of the IDRC President's Office, and preparatory work has been going on so that research linkages could be set in place as soon as funds are available — in April 1981. The figure of $12 million mentioned by Senator Asselin was a target towards which, one presumes, the Government of Canada will move. The amount available for cooperative research projects in 1981/1982 will be relatively modest: $1 million.

III

I have presented the UNCSTD formulation to you in some detail, at the risk of boring those of you who are familiar with it, because it outlines the framework within which a new phase of cooperative projects can evolve. The assurance of funding addi-
tional to the Centre’s regular budget for cooperative research projects linking Canadian and developing country researchers is based entirely on Canada’s pledge at UNCSTD. The responsiveness of that pledge to a developing countries’ proposal sets out in advance the broad objectives of research cooperation. The opportunity for the Canadian research community to be directly involved in development-oriented research arises from the assurance of annual funding earmarked for this purpose. The challenge to the Canadian research community to ensure that collaborative research is truly collaborative in scope, substance and form. The advantage to developing countries is that they will have an avenue through which their requirements can be matched with Canadian expertise. To ensure that these strands are interwoven, the new activity will not be restricted to the Centre’s established program areas, but could be extended to other areas where LDC needs and Canadian capacity are identifiably complementary.

Proposals for cooperative research have already been made by institutions in, for instance, St. Lucia - Barbados, Kenya, Ethiopia et Malaysia. Some of these institutions have established contact with Canadian counterparts, and their proposals have been jointly formulated. In other instances, developing country institutions have stated the nature of the problem they wish to address, described both the availability and the inadequacy of local staff and facilities, and have asked whether they could be helped to find Canadian partners. Another approach is for a Canadian institution to take the initiative, in which case it will be IDRC’s responsibility to determine whether Canadian and LDC perceptions are compatible, and whether the project envisaged will be designed and carried out in a truly cooperative manner.
"Most of the scientific capacity, and in particular most of the very specialized scientific expertise and equipment, existing in the world today is located in developed countries. An important question is the extent to which this expertise should be utilized to assist developing countries... At present it is underutilized."

William Tossell says in "Partnership in Development", a recent study published by the Science Council of Canada. At least as far as Canada is concerned, that situation can now change, and Canadian researchers can be more directly involved in processes that can be as exciting as they are professionally rewarding.

What might be called the bureaucracy of the program — the format in which submission should be made, procedures for review and so on — will be made known to all Canadian universities, as soon as these are in final form. I will also be inviting university participation in an "encounter" next Spring which will bring Canadian universities to participate to the fullest extent possible in the planned partnership.

I invite you, therefore, to work closely with those of us at IDRC who will be seeking in the coming months to add form and substance to the guiding principles which emerged from UNCSTD. I invite your views on how best Canada's domestic research and development capabilities can be applied to the solution of the problems of developing countries. And I urge you to respond positively to requests from developing country institutions for collaborative assistance.
Ladies and gentlemen:

When the predecessor of this seminar was held at Guelph in April of this year, IDRC President Ivan Head said that IDRC's post-UNCSTD responsibility "is a welcome new area of activity for the Centre because it will permit us in a substantive way to be more deeply involved with the Canadian university community than we have been in the past." The product of that involvement, potentially, is a three-way partnership — encompassing Canadian researchers, IDRC, and developing countries — which will have a direct and beneficial impact on the lives of disadvantaged peoples.

Canadian universities or university staff have contributed to international development and international cooperation from at least as far back as 1959 when university representatives attended the first Commonwealth Education Conference out of which grew the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan. This province has been something of a pioneer in international development. The first documented overseas development activity of a Canadian university saw the University of British Columbia founding, devising curricula for, teaching at, and training a new generation of local staff for Ghana's Institute of Community Planning. That was in 1961. Shortly thereafter, a university administrator from this province, while reconfirming the willingness of Canadian universities to work with developing countries, said:

"... every university administrator must keep in mind that in the main, no provision has been made for these special programs."

Manifestly, university administrators are practical people, with their eyes on the ball, and their instincts emphasizing the follow-through. Today, some provision has been made; with a
relatively modest beginning to be sure, but in a way that holds out the promise of continuity, for many years to come. That provision was made, moreover, in the context of attempts to redefine and restructure North-South relationships. As those relationships evolve globally, there remains a compelling need for sectoral and sub-sectoral partnerships designed and pursued to improve the human condition. For the "wretched of the earth", as Frantz Fanon described them, the most compulsive option is, hope. You can help to make those hopes come alive.