

We have been learning about international aid. We are concerned that Canadian commercial interests, rather than Third World needs, are most important in Canada's aid program. Therefore we ask you that, first, you assign a high priority in our bilateral aid program to small-scale agriculture projects, which build the confidence, skills, and material resources needed to overcome hunger; (62:56-57)

Kristin Martin continued,

That, second, you commit yourselves to gradual and steady steps to unite bilateral aid programs. Foreign aid should benefit those for whom it is intended, the poor of the Third World. (62:57)

A large number of briefs spoke in favour of a generous Canadian aid policy. Specifically, many witnesses called for the government to increase the amount of aid it is giving. Typical of these was the Social Action Commission of the Diocese of Charlottetown, which advocated "an increase in Canadian aid. We believe that the figure of 0.6% of our gross national product is too small." (32:41) There were references to the desirability of reaching the 0.7-per cent target sooner than is now proposed by the government. Among supporters of a more active Canadian role in international development, some placed primary emphasis on increased funding for the work of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Third World countries. These witnesses claimed that there were numerous benefits to citizen involvement. CUSO Saskatoon expressed this approach with particular clarity.

In CUSO's experience, small-scale and local projects that are planned by the people who will use them are most effective in the long term....From our experience in working with NGOs, we know they have the ability and the experience to administer small projects. Small projects are one of the few ways that the poorest can be reached. Small projects are also less likely to create dependency relationships because of the small amounts of money involved. Further, because NGOs are community based, a better opportunity exists for the development of equal partnerships benefiting both Canadians and overseas groups. (40:32-34)

Apart from concerns that Canada's aid program be as generous as possible and directed to helping the poor, the committee saw evidence of a growing appreciation that relations between developed and developing countries are now at the centre of international economic management. Submissions on North-South issues emphasized the seriousness of the debt problems facing many Third World countries and the critical importance of dealing with them in such a way as to encourage their recovery and development. Increased access for Third World exports to markets in industrialized countries was seen as an essential requirement for the ultimate resolution of this critical situation.