

serving with UNEF II and UNDOF at a total annual cost of approximately \$13 million, including pay and allowances. Under a special formula to reimburse troop contributors, about \$9 million is claimed from the UN annually by Canada to offset these expenses. As the entire cost of UNEF-UNDOF is borne by the UN membership, Canada, as a member of the UN, is assessed about 3 per cent of that cost, amounting to \$2.9 million in the fiscal year 1976-77.

Voluntary contributions, mostly for development-assistance costs as distinguished from regular budget expenses, constitute a much larger part of Canada's financial contribution to the UN system, amounting in 1977 to \$168 million. Canada gave priority to the UN's central development-assistance funds, such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which together received about \$40 million from Canada, and to the World Food Program, to which Canada gave \$99 million (\$10 million cash, \$89 million in food grains). The concentration of its aid in these UN institutions reflects Canada's position as one of the world's major food-producers and its preference, in principle, to channel assistance through general-development funds rather than the various special-purpose funds established from time to time by the UN Specialized Agencies. Smaller contributions in cash and kind went towards refugee activities, programs for the benefit of the victims of *apartheid*, and humanitarian and disaster-relief assistance, all of which responded to urgent needs in the international community. The major part of such expenditures were channelled through the Canadian International Development Agency.

Special conferences

Each year the United Nations, through its related organs and programs and through the Specialized Agencies, sponsors several major conferences on the solution of particular world problems. These conferences are usually concerned primarily with technical questions and most representatives, including those of Canada, are specialists on the subjects discussed. Though political differences often arise, these conferences provide opportunities to resolve them.

In 1977 there were a number of special UN conferences, the most important of which were: the United Nations International Water Conference, held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, to discuss the problem of the international or transboundary fresh-water supply and the quality of fresh water; the third United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, held in Athens, Greece, to discuss the reports of various regional committees on nomenclature and cartography and to standardize geographical names; and the United Nations Conference on Desertification, held in Nairobi under the auspices of the UN Environment Program, to discuss problems of prolonged drought, particularly in Africa, and solutions such as increased use of dry-land farming techniques. Another special meeting was the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on Territorial Asylum, held in Geneva, which discussed the increasing problems of stateless persons and refugees in finding permanent residence in other countries.