

dent and one element cannot be changed without materially affecting all others. Further, a development assistance programme affects the central social and political aspirations of the developing nations, and must be sensitive to those aspirations. And, finally, the ultimate rationale for the provision of development assistance raises fundamental questions about the nature of the obligations of men and states to each other, questions that have occupied the attention of philosophers and political scientists for centuries and to which there are not yet universally accepted answers.

To reach conclusions on which a coherent development assistance policy can be based, it is necessary to examine these complex issues and to identify the main considerations that pertain to each. The first question is: Why does an international development problem exist and why is it important that Canada do something about it?

The search for the answer to this question can be aided by trying to identify what is unique about the development problem in the twentieth century. Poverty is not unique to this century. It has always been prevalent in the world, perhaps in even more severe degree than today. What is unique today is the fact that the existence of large-scale poverty and the attempts to relieve it have become an important issue within nations and in relationships amongst nations. This arises from several factors. One is that while there has always been a gap between rich and poor within virtually all nations there has never before been the wide disparity as between nations which today separates the highly-developed industrialized nations from the less-developed, low-income nations of the world.

A second factor is that never before has there been such universal awareness of these disparities. There are a number of technological, social and political factors that suggest that poverty in the developing countries will become an increasingly important issue in the remaining decades of this century. The very rapid development of the means of communication has brought the affluent and the poor into much more direct contact with each other. No longer can the wealthy live in exclusive neighbourhoods or country estates, isolated from both contact with and knowledge of the extent and intensity of poverty around them. Nor do the poor now live only in isolated countries or rural regions, or in well-defined urban slums, with little knowledge or contact with the rest of society. The automobile, train, radio, cinema, television, and airplane have changed those conditions. The advent of cheap mass air travel will accentuate the rate of change even more: for air travel permits a direct two-way person-to-person contact which may have a greater impact than the relatively passive acquisition of information from television and cinema. The affluent are now very aware