

limited to a communications and facilitating role. At present, the only coordinated follow-up to the World Food Summit is the Canadian Government's Joint Follow-up Committee to the World Food Summit, chaired by Agriculture Canada. OXFAM Canada, CHF-Partners in Rural Development, the Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI), the Unitarian Service Committee (USC) and a representative of the GNFS from UNA Canada participate in this committee. The committee is focused primarily on follow-up in Canada, but its agenda includes Canada's international role and commitments. It is still too early to say how useful it will be; some feel that there may not be enough space there for views that are contrary to the government's outlook. One member feels that a useful area of work at the committee would be a review of the Agriculture and Food component of CIDA's basic needs strategy, an area that has been neglected in recent years.

Perhaps the strongest capacity for research and advocacy on food security issues within a single NGO is that of the Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI), an international policy NGO headquartered in Canada. RAFI focuses its research and advocacy primarily at the multilateral level. It is concerned about the loss of genetic diversity -- especially in agriculture -- and about the impact of intellectual property on agriculture and world food security. Its program involves action on food security, agricultural biodiversity, and the right of farmers to conserve and use the seed varieties they have developed. RAFI also works with indigenous peoples on their knowledge of biodiversity and their right to protect their resources and knowledge from appropriation and commercial exploitation by outsiders. Together, these two streams underpin most of RAFI's activities, whether in research, publication, or policy advocacy in the international arena.

RAFI is currently working on a strategy aimed at 1999, when the World Trade Organization (WTO) will reassess the agricultural and intellectual property provisions of its World Trade Agreement. Almost all of RAFI's current activities aim to change the terms of the WTO agreement when it comes under review. During 1997, RAFI is preparing for the FAO Regional Meetings during the first half of 1998. RAFI will assist its regional networks to intervene at these meetings to follow up the commitments made by governments at the World Food Summit in Rome last year, especially the commitments to carry out "hunger mapping" to identify who is most vulnerable to food insecurity, to develop national strategies on food security, to respect and fulfill the right to food, and to launch national Food for All Campaigns to mobilize all levels of society in support of the implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action. RAFI is able to provide information and analysis to NGOs about what may be achievable in these advocacy efforts. All RAFI publications are disseminated on the Internet at RAFI's web site -- www.rafi.ca.