

It is generally agreed that our world's fields and oceans produce enough food to feed mankind. However, because food is not always produced where population is concentrated, there is a need for all nations to pool our efforts to ensure a more efficient distribution of food. At the very least, we need a system of food delivery that responds quickly and with minimal waste to countries facing special emergencies. The co-operative development of an international early warning system would help mankind reduce the devastation of prolonged food shortages. In short, we require a food distribution system based on global and national considerations which would guide the movement of food during times of plenty and times of scarcity. In this regard, our Minister of Agriculture will be announcing later this morning Canada's position on a new food aid convention.

When famine or food shortages strike, some groups are more vulnerable than others. In this International Year of the Child the spectacle of 200 million undernourished children — and their families, suffering on a similar scale — is a stark reminder of the distance we must move. I hope a major objective of this session will be the determination of more effective ways for food aid to be directed to particularly vulnerable groups; to make them priority recipients under international food assistance programs. Canada will play its full part in this endeavour.

In the five years since the 1974 World Food Conference, the World Food Council has done much to mobilize support for coherent policy among governments and concerned agencies. In addition, the recent World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development helped focus world attention on the need to give higher priority to rural development.

During that Conference, many speakers emphasized that the essential decisions for alleviating hunger and malnutrition are of a political nature and only secondarily related to natural resources and technical factors. There appear to be few physical or technological limits to the expansion of world food supply to meet projected population growths over coming decades. However, only with continued and concentrated efforts will production increases fulfil potential and adequately serve world demand.

Tous les pays dont l'économie ne repose pas sur une agriculture solide devraient par conséquent accorder une plus grande priorité à l'alimentation et à l'agriculture dans leur plan de développement.

Le relèvement de la production agricole est en effet la condition sine qua non pour améliorer la nutrition et accroître le revenu et le nombre d'emplois, deux facteurs essentiels à l'accélération du taux de croissance économique. Ce dernier facteur devrait être considéré comme le catalyseur de la croissance de leur économie. Parallèlement, les gouvernements devront veiller à la répartition adéquate et équitable de ces efforts, de manière à assurer aux masses rurales une juste part des avantages de la croissance.

La récente extension de la zone économique des États côtiers nous offre à tous une occasion unique de veiller à ce que les avantages découlant du nouveau droit de la mer soient répartis également entre les citoyens. Le Canada estime que tous les pays en voie de développement qui exploitent des pêcheries ou qui sont dotés d'un potentiel