

At the international level, despite record cereal stocks, we have failed to build an international system of global food security capable of preventing the recurrence of a crisis like that of 1972-74.

Canada is committed to the objective of an international grains agreement which would provide the basis for such a security system. We remain convinced that world food security must be based on international arrangements which ensure stable and adequate returns to producers and thus ensure that the necessary investment in increased production capacity and improved infrastructure are made.

Because the world community has not yet found reasonable compromises between the different producer and consumer nations, the world's poor remain critically vulnerable. We want the international community to be ready with an adequate response when the 1971 International Wheat Agreement expires just one year and eight months from now. To help provide some of the "bridging" aid required, the Canadian government has agreed to negotiate a new Food Aid Convention separately from a Wheat Trade Convention, although the new Food Aid Convention would remain linked to the 1979 International Wheat Agreement. As indicated during the wheat negotiations, Canada intends to provide 600,000 tons of grain annually to the new Food Aid Convention. We remain very conscious that total food aid needs are still greater than total commitments, and we urge other states which are able to do so to increase their contributions in this area.

In the long-term perspective, there are some grounds for encouragement in the doubling of international development assistance for food production between 1973 and 1977, with multi-lateral agencies accounting for the greatest part of this increase. However, in its Report, the World Food Council noted with alarm that current and projected levels of investment in food production and distribution fall far short of assuring the food needs of the world's growing population.

In the developing countries themselves, the twin challenges of production and distribution remain, in spite of substantial effort and notable improvement in some countries.

Production growth in the Third World as a whole has barely kept pace with population increases and on average shows no improvement over the 1960s. For those countries which have achieved substantial improvements in production and distribution, it is a striking achievement, since these goals often go against the social grain and are vitally influenced by a great number of economic and other conditions.

Yet I have to say, Mr. Chairman, that many countries have fallen short of the improvement they could have achieved. Despite the calls of many international conferences and the