

Jamaica, which suffered the devastation of Hurricane Gilbert in mid-September, Canada unilaterally declared a two-year moratorium on repayment of all Canadian official development assistance debts. This measure was additional to almost \$10 million in public and private emergency relief assistance sent to Jamaica following the passage of Hurricane Gilbert. Canada also assumed leadership in the International Monetary Fund Support Group, formed to devise a financial assistance package to allow Guyana to continue to honour its obligations to international financial institutions.

The fifth meeting of the Canada-CARICOM Joint Trade and Economic Committee was convened in Port of Spain from March 6 to 9, at which time Canada was able to reinforce its commitment to the region through trade, official development assistance, industrial co-operation and other mechanisms. Canadian trade and industrial development initiatives included the organization and implementation of trade shows in Jamaica, the Bahamas and the Dominican Republic. These events were intended to increase the level of trade and industrial co-operation activity.

Another important instrument designed to promote these objectives is CARIBCAN, a Canadian government program approved in 1986. This program, currently under review following the initial two-year operating period, features the unilateral extension by Canada of preferential duty-free access to a broad range of goods shipped by Commonwealth Caribbean countries into the Canadian market. The program also includes measures to strengthen the exporting capabilities of beneficiary countries, as well as to provide

information on the Canadian market and ways and means of developing marketing strategies.

The Commonwealth Caribbean Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program continued to expand in 1988 with 3 900 workers participating. Also of note was the imposition of a visitor visa requirement on Trinidad and Tobago following a large increase in the number of improperly documented visitors from that country.

A number of high-level visits took place during the year, in particular those by the prime ministers of St. Vincent and Jamaica to Canada as well as that of the Vice-President of the Dominican Republic. Canadian ships took part in the 10th independence anniversary of St. Lucia and made port calls in a number of other Caribbean islands.

In excess of 500 000 Canadian tourists travel to the Caribbean annually, mainly to Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, the Bahamas and Barbados.

#### **Haiti**

Haiti experienced a number of political upheavals in 1988/89, during which time bilateral relations with Canada were marked by three important events: first, the group of parliamentarians that had visited Haiti at Mr. Clark's request to investigate the situation and review Canada's relations with that country tabled its report in the House of Commons. Second, the Canadian government decided, on September 13, to refrain from negotiating with the Haitian government over new official development aid projects. This decision came only a few days before the Namphy regime was overthrown by Lieutenant-General Prosper Avril. This past year also saw meetings between CIDA and its missionary and NGO partners working in Haiti.