

Recommendation No. 3

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada meet the Agenda 21 target of 0.7% of GNP for Official Development Assistance (ODA) by the year 2000, or sooner if possible. In addition, the Committee recommends that the Government of Canada consider the advisability of (i) using ODA as an inducement to discourage military spending, and (ii) linking ODA to programs in developing countries that support environmental protection, sustainable development, and human development (health care, education, population control, and in particular the empowerment of women through literacy).

It is to be noted that this recommendation did not receive unanimous Committee approval. One Committee member chose not to support the recommendation because it was felt that (i) the recommendation supported population control, and (ii) the use of ODA as an inducement to discourage military spending might affect the domestic and national security of a sovereign state.

Direct financial aid is but one of the mechanisms needed to assist developing countries. Witnesses before this Committee urged Canada to use its influence in the international arena to effect change. Tim Draimin pointed out the need for OECD countries to liberalize trade with the South, and to take action to alleviate Third World debt. This sentiment was reflected by Mahbub ul Haq:

I think it is true that what the poor ultimately need is not charity, except as a temporary measure, but access to markets, whether domestically or internationally.²⁸

Art Hanson highlighted the need for technology transfer:

The science and technology of sustainable development is still at quite an early stage, and without a doubt the needed technology sharing will require an immense additional political effort. The important findings emerging from organizations such as the Business Council for Sustainable Development, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, and the various world scientific bodies that engaged in UNCED preparations suggest the need for an expanded global effort, including much better information sharing and technology transfer.²⁹

Chapter 2 of Agenda 21 elaborates the decision by all States to establish a new global partnership in which they are committed to working toward a more efficient and equitable world economy, with sustainable development as a priority item on the international community's agenda. The Chapter recognizes the relevance of domestic and international economic policies for sustainable development, and the need to relate the elements of the international economic system with the human need for a safe and stable natural environment. Development in the countries of the South requires a supportive international economic environment, and will not progress if developing countries are hampered by external indebtedness, if there is inadequate financing, if there is restricted access to markets, or if commodity prices and the terms of trade for developing countries remain depressed.

The international community agreed in paragraph 2.3 of Agenda 21 that

[t]he international economy should provide a supportive international climate for achieving environment and development goals by:

²⁸ Ibid., p. 15.

²⁹ *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Environment*, Issue No. 46, 17 November 1992, p. 21.