

Federal program for reduction of flood damage

Environment Canada Minister Jeanne Sauvé recently invited a new federal approach to reducing the mounting toll of damages caused by floods. The long-range approach is based on the development of a series of federal-provincial accords to reduce potential flood damages and a national flood-hazard mapping program.

"Canada has to reduce the toll of personal suffering and financial loss due to floods," said Madame Sauvé. "We have developed a co-ordinated federal-provincial approach to water-resource management through the Canada Water Act. Accords on floods will focus that co-operation on a concerted effort to reduce the averages of floods in Canada."

The proposed accords would be based on the principles that:

(a) Flood-risk areas must be clearly defined and mapped.

(b) Information on flood hazards must be communicated to the public, industry, municipalities and the provinces.

(c) Construction of federal facilities, federal housing loans and other grants and loans should not be made in flood-risk areas or be made conditional upon adequate flood-proofing or other damage-reduction measures.

(d) Disaster assistance should be refused for further development in identified high flood-risk areas where the public has been made fully aware of the hazard.

(e) Provinces and municipalities should be encouraged to consider appropriate restrictions on land use in high flood-risk areas.

Federal-provincial co-operation in keeping with these principles is evident in five pilot flood-hazard mapping projects now under way. A flood-risk map

for Fredericton (New Brunswick) is almost complete and maps for Carman (Manitoba), Moose Jaw (Saskatchewan) and Oshawa and Sault Ste Marie (Ontario) are being drafted.

As a key part of this new approach to flood-damage reduction, a national flood-hazard mapping program has been approved. The mapping program may cost up to \$20 million, with costs shared equally by the Federal Government and the provinces. Priorities for mapping flood risks for more than 200 rural and urban communities affected by floods will be worked out jointly.

"When this flood-risk information is available, federal and provincial governments can undertake commitments to discourage further investment in flood-risk areas," Madame Sauvé explained. "However, if it is not possible to work out a mutually acceptable accord with any province, the Federal Government will not be deterred from doing what it can. We shall act decisively in our own areas of responsibility."

The Federal Government will continue to participate in traditional flood-control projects, such as dams, where these offer the best solution. However, a greater emphasis will be placed on a combination of structural and non-structural alternatives.

Canada and Japan

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The short answer is that the policies of the past, no matter how successful, are not likely to be the most appropriate for the future. The structure of the world economy is constantly changing. The changes have been particularly dramatic, in the last few years, in the field of energy and resources; but we expect the need for policy changes to be as great in other fields of industrial activity, even if it will be possible — I hope — to introduce them more gradually. The call of developing countries for a "new world economic order", for example, may not immediately threaten the competitiveness of our industries; but one way or another, it is bound to bring about eventually a greater penetration of our markets by Third World producers of consumer goods.

Accordingly, we believe that higher energy costs, scarcer resources and stronger competition from low-wage

developing economies will force countries like Japan and Canada to alter regularly their commercial and industrial strategies in the years to come.

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More precisely, we hope to begin with the Japanese Government, in the next few months, a multi-phased exploration of potential areas of bilateral economic and industrial co-operation between our two countries. In the first phase, officials will identify the industries which should be given priority in a program of bilateral industrial co-operation, either because they correspond to the national priorities of one or the other country, or else because they are the areas where Canada/Japanese co-operation is likely to be the most promising. The second phase would consist of in-depth examination of those priority areas; after which specific plans and projects could be worked out, taking into account the capabilities and requirements of both countries, in close co-ordination with the Japanese and Canadian private sectors.

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...The success of the partnership we hope will develop between Canada and Japan depends ultimately upon greater understanding between our two peoples. This is why the Canadian Government attaches great importance to what could be called "people's diplomacy". We are pleased that the number of Japanese tourists coming to Canada is steadily increasing and could reach 100,000 this year. We are negotiating with your Government a new agreement to expand bilateral cultural exchanges, and our two Governments are already committed to allocate approximately 300 million yen each (\$1 million) to the promotion of Canadian studies in Japan and of Japanese studies in Canada. At this very moment, a Japanese parliamentary delegation is in Canada to lay the groundwork for regular parliamentary exchanges between our two countries. In the same vein, we cordially invite the Japanese media to establish permanent offices in Canada, to report more regularly on the kind of society we are and we hope to become, as well as to alert the Japanese public to the numerous opportunities for greater co-operation in all fields between Japan and Canada.

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