



Statements and Speeches

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THE ELIMINATION OF MAN'S OLDEST SCOURGE AND MOST PERSISTENT ENEMY -- HUNGER

Speech by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, to the World Food Conference, Rome, November 6, 1974.

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This conference is engaged on a mission to seek the elimination of hunger -- man's oldest scourge and most persistent enemy. Together with the Law of the Sea Conference in Caracas and the World Population Conference in Bucharest, it is part of a process of reassessment of man's global relationship to the resources that sustain him that may yield us a new consciousness of the global responsibilities carried by every nation and people. We in Canada will not shirk these responsibilities, and are willing to play our part in furthering those common endeavours that bear promise of helping to produce a lasting freedom from want for all mankind -- but the endeavours will remain barren if they are not truly common and truly sustained.

Hunger must today be tackled at every level -- at the family, village, province, country and region as well as the global level -- for no unit of society bears any graver responsibility than that of feeding its people. In our present world community we are everywhere faced with an agonizing awareness of starvation wherever it occurs; and finding means to harness production around the world to alleviate it poses a challenge to our ingenuity as well as to our compassion. We in Canada recognize that our farmers can grow more than they do at present. To that end, we have recently taken several policy initiatives that will ensure not only that producers will have more stable and satisfactory returns but that they will have a better transport and storage system to get their products to market. We believe that these initiatives will permit Canadian agriculture more nearly to reach its potential. We must, however, remember that, whatever food may move internationally, most men for the foreseeable future will inevitably remain dependent on the food produced near to their neighbourhood markets.

It is for this reason that Canada emphatically supports the development of increased food-production capacity by developing countries as the key to an anti-hunger strategy. Where opportunities for efficient food production exist, my Government stands ready to accord it a high priority in our assistance programs.
