

Canada can and should make a durable commitment to Africa. There is really no other choice. The problems of Africa are the problems of the world. We cannot and will not ignore the consequences of famine; we should and must join the fight to prevent famine.

The Canadian people have said so. Their generous response to the famine proves that Canadians understand the vital importance of compassion and solidarity in the world. This understanding goes beyond a momentary — and monetary — response to television images of suffering and death. A national poll commissioned by my office revealed that Canadians rank world hunger first on a list of most serious world problems.* They understand it is a long-term situation, whose progress can only be measured in decades. Of the poor regions of the world, most Canadians think Africa is in the greatest need: if asked to choose, they would focus Canadian aid efforts in that region.

A careful examination of national self-interest points to the same conclusion. The paper *Competitiveness and Security: Directions for Canada's International Relations*, presented to Parliament by the Right Honourable Joe Clark, identifies security as one of our country's two basic foreign policy objectives. Can security be achieved in a world where mass starvation is allowed to occur? The answer to that question has been provided by 40 years of Canadian foreign policy: it is the special role and responsibility of countries like Canada to build security based on cooperation and development.

Canada is in a position to further develop a strong record of support for Africa. Since November 1984, Canada has supplied about 8 per cent of total emergency aid: our contributions to emergency food aid rank second in the world. Over the past twenty years Canadian diplomacy, unburdened by colonial baggage, has built strong links with the francophone and Commonwealth countries of Africa. In no part of the world is there a greater opportunity to exercise a creative, independent Canadian foreign policy. In my travels throughout Africa I have felt a special warmth and trust towards Canada. We have earned credibility in Africa. We should now make full use of it.

*"Canadians and Africa: What Was Said" a nation-wide survey conducted by Decima Research Limited in February 1986