

ASEAN CANADA FUND FOR LOCAL INITIATIVES

The overall mandate of the ASEAN Canada Fund, formerly known as the Mission Administered Fund (MAF), is to provide financial support to innovative development proposals which promote regional cooperation, the strengthening of ASEAN networks and, as much as possible, meet the needs of the rural and urban poor. In 1988-89, funds totalling \$350,000 were approved for a range of training opportunities offered by regional NGOs to small member organizations, who in turn work with the rural/urban poor and disadvantaged groups.

As always, the activities funded this year were wide-ranging. However, three priority areas were identified by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA): Women in Development (WID), Human Rights and the Environment. Forty-three per cent of the projects funded were directly concerned with addressing women's issues and needs, while in 36, the role of women was identified as a specific part of the overall project.

Because the development process is, by its very nature, an interdisciplinary one, many projects received and funded address several issues simultaneously. Human rights issues often fall into this category. Developing a resource kit to assist media personnel and women's organizations in dealing with misrepresentation of women in the media; training people to protect their environment and their health from pesticide abuse; helping the disabled develop strategies for changing discriminatory legislation and policies; training human rights activists in information handling and documentation — all address human rights issues at different levels.

Despite the relatively few regional environmental agencies in ASEAN, some excellent proposals were received and funded this year. Environmental issues had begun to receive a great deal of press during the latter part of this fiscal year and a number of well-attended conferences had also taken place. This will no

BOOSTING MUNICIPAL- LEVEL DEVELOPMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES



Ambassador Davidson presenting the cheque to PBSP President Bienvenido Tan

Rural development in the Philippines received another shot in the arm with the recent release by the Canadian Government of \$307,000 to the "Negros Municipal Development Council Institution—Building Program" of the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP). PBSP is an association of Philippine companies which recognize the responsibility of the corporate community in the country's economic recovery efforts. This particular program seeks to transform Municipal Development Councils (MDCs) into active agents of socio-economic growth in their respective localities. It will benefit 19 MDCs over the next two years.

The assistance, formally turned over by Canadian Ambassador Russell Davidson to Attorney Bienvenido Tan, PBSP President, is part of the Negros Rehabilitation and Development Fund of CIDA. Canada officially elevated its aid relationship with the Philippines following the visit in 1986 of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Joe Clark, who noted the need for an expanded assistance program from Canada to help the Philippines in its development efforts.

doubt result in an increase of supportable projects next fiscal year.

Of the many excellent projects funded, two deserve special mention because of their innovative approaches.

The International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) organized a management training session for 20 women who are involved in running rural health and family planning projects. The session was designed based on the premise that these women have, through their work and life experiences, developed *bona fide*, albeit unacknowledged, management skills.

The International Organization of Consumer Unions (Malaysia) has

developed an innovative approach which has been duplicated by other proposers. Recognizing that very often, training is done without the opportunity to test its usefulness, IOCU built seed-projects monies into its budget thus providing trainees with the opportunity to develop relevant projects. This results in a double learning experience because by monitoring the projects, the organization has the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of its program and make the necessary changes for future sessions.