

FRANCOPHONE AFRICA

SAHEL

This region of Africa, South of the Sahara, was affected by a drought, lasting six years, which decimated the livestock of the region and caused the death of an estimated hundred thousand persons.

Given the magnitude of the disaster as well as of the measures needed to be taken in order to avoid its repetition, the Sahel States created the CILSS and through it appealed to the international community to contribute to the elaboration and application of a series of regional programmes and projects. It is in response to an appeal by the CILSS made in 1975, as well as at the instigation of the OECD, that the Club of the Friends of the Sahel was created.

The participation of Canada in the Club dates from this period and is part of this country's general effort since 1974 in the development of this region, through both bilateral programmes and support granted to the CILSS.

In 1974, Canada initiated a five-year programme for the Sahel which amounted to an estimated \$230 million. The main sectors of the programme are as follows: the development of agricultural production (food products), the opening up of the region, development of mineral and hydraulic resources and the protection of the vegetal cover. The agreed objectives of the industrialised countries and the Sahel States are, in the short term, to prevent further mass starvation and, in the medium term, to promote the economic recovery and development of the Sahel countries.

As one of Africa's "privileged" partners, it was only natural for Canada to be the host, in the last week of May, 1977, for an important international meeting which will group in the capital, under the auspices of the Club of the Friends of the Sahel, the ministers responsible for the development of the Sahelian region and the representatives of approximately 50 countries and regional or international organizations.

Since 1961, at which date Canada established a resident mission in Cameroon, relations with French speaking Africa have been intensified, expanded, and diversified, to the point where they now exceed the limited framework of bilateral relations. The continuing dialogue and collaboration as between equal partners, is now carried on in the various specialized agencies of the United Nations and other fora where questions such as the Law of the Sea and the new economic order