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Help for poorer nations urged at World Food Council meeting in Ottawa

Representatives of thirty-six member nations of the United Nations World Food Council met in Ottawa, September 4-7, for their Fifth Ministerial Session. The series of workshops and seminars focused on three main issues: overcoming the constraints to increasing food production in developing countries; world food security, trade and aid; and hunger and malnutrition, and greater equity in distribution of food.

Canada, which is placing more importance on projects to improve the supply and distribution of food in developing countries, promised among other commitments, to establish a special fund for future strategies.

Prime Minister Joe Clark, who opened the conference, said in his welcoming speech to Council representatives that the conference was taking place at a time when the world economic system was under strain. "Industrialized countries, such as Canada," he said, "face the

difficult but not intractable problems of inflation, unemployment and erratic growth."

Although there was general agreement that abundant resources existed to feed the world's population, he said, "because food is not always produced where population is concentrated, there is a need for all nations to pool [their] resources to ensure a more efficient distribution of food". The Prime Minister said a system of food delivery that responds quickly and with minimal waste to countries in emergency situations was required and he suggested the development of an international early warning system to help reduce the "devastation of prolonged food shortages".

Importance of fisheries

The extension of the economic zones of the coastal countries would provide an opportunity "to make sure that the benefits generated by this new convention be distributed equally amongst all", said Mr. Clark. He stressed that all developing countries engaged in fisheries or with fisheries potential should give this sector highest priority.

Canada is ready "to share [its] food agriculture and fisheries expertise and knowhow with developing countries wishing to attain food self-sufficiency", said the Prime Minister. The Canadian Government had given priority to agricultural and rural development in its aid program, bilaterally as well as multilaterally, continued Mr. Clark, and Canada would maintain its current level of international food aid at \$400 million annually.

"A key element of food security is a system of nationally-held reserve stocks and improved international trade," said Mr. Clark. "Canada continues to seek realistic reserve supply commitments as part of an over-all agreement to govern world trade of food grains."

Canada has made "great progress in food production," said the Prime



Agriculture Minister John Wise (centre) at a press conference with Arturo Tanco Jr. (right) the new President of the World Food Council, and Gaétan Lussier, Deputy Minister, Agriculture Canada.

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Sixty-two years ago this week... Parliament gave votes to women who had close relatives in the armed forces.

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