

The UN Economic and Social Council last July, as everyone knows, engaged in a notable discussion on the problems of the continent.

So too, the World Bank's Special Program for Sub-Saharan African, and finally, during the course of this debate, there is the emergence of the "Draft Declaration on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa".

What we are saying is that we have subjected the crisis in Africa to a continuing and remorseless dissection, and it is now time to act upon the generally shared conclusions. Having listened carefully to my predecessors in this debate, it becomes clear that every participant country, with varying shades of emphasis, seems committed to the proposition that the crisis of Africa is an international *cause célèbre* which the collective political will of this United Nations must resolve. And above all, on this kind of fundamental issue, we must seek agreement without any of the extraneous immoderation which turns useful debate into spasms of irrationality.

That is the position of Canada. But it of course goes further, into the matters of substance as well:

It is now widely recognized that structural impediments to growth, especially in agriculture, have been the source of much of the decline in output. The Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that for agriculture alone, *per capita* output fell in Sub-Saharan Africa by an average of 1 per cent a year during the 1970s and the decline has been even more dramatic in the 1980s. Pricing, marketing, investment and income policies have failed to provide adequate incentives to local producers. Governments often didn't make food production a priority in terms of public investment. Rapid growth in population — between 3.2 and 4 per cent *per annum* — has also been an additional barrier to self-sufficiency in food, as has the expanding desertification and loss of agricultural land. These tendencies, coupled with an international recession characterized by falling commodity prices, high interest rates, rising energy costs and inflation have crippled production and economic growth.

Just as the immediate crisis cannot be ignored, the deteriorating economic situation in Africa over the past decade can neither be dismissed nor hidden. African nations and the international community must both acknowledge that our past initiatives have failed in whole or in part. For African countries it means a recognition that some of their domestic policies have been ineffective or inappropriate — a recognition, incidentally, which is implicitly contained in the Draft Declaration. For the international community it means that many of our investments have been misdirected or ill-conceived. We have probably placed too much emphasis on the financing of new infrastructure, and ignored the problems of maintaining it. More of the same is pointless for us all.

Canada believes therefore that remedies must be simultaneously applied to the short-term crisis and long-term economic malaise. Our immediate concern, naturally enough, has been relief to the estimated 150 million victims of the drought in the 24 most seriously affected countries, and to the four million refugees from other natural or man-made disasters. In 1983-84, Canada provided over \$100 million in various forms of assistance to meet emergency food shortages in Africa.

Our commitment will not diminish. It has intensified. In 1984-85 African countries will receive over