

As you know, we have added a fourth principle to the three proposed by SCEAIT: that development assistance must strengthen the links between Canadian citizens and institutions and those of the countries of the Third World. The ultimate goal is to create a true partnership among all people of good will, a human chain.

Each recommendation the Committee put forward has been carefully and thoroughly examined. As you know from our response of last week, most we could endorse. There are a few which we cannot accept in practice although we applaud the intent that lies behind them.

I am thinking here of the call for the classification of developing countries in a grid according to detailed criteria for measuring human rights performance. I agree on the importance of taking human rights considerations fully into account in planning Canada's aid programs. But I will never let the poor be penalized for actions of their governments nor will I let the victims of oppressive regimes suffer twice from the same predicament.

While we will be giving more weight to human rights performance in terms of the eligibility framework, the emphasis on human resource development will ensure that those who suffer benefit most from our programs. Our commitment to human rights is also reflected in our decision to create an international centre for human rights and institutional development.

For 13 years now, the issue of a thorough review and reform of our aid policy has been the subject of endless debates. The day has finally come. Very shortly I shall be presenting a strategy aimed at setting both the philosophy and the guidelines underlying the future delivery of our foreign aid programs to the year 2000. Again, deeds must follow words and every and all Canadians have to be active participants in this endeavour.

In an interdependent world, international relations are part and parcel of the daily lives of all Canadians. Foreign policy, for this government, is very much a domestic - or internal - priority. Never before have Canadians been as involved as they are today in the making of their foreign policy.