

centrated on low-income developing nations. During the 1970s, that concentration accounted for an average of 75 per cent of our funds earmarked for public aid to development. Canada ranks first among industrialized nations in terms of percentage of aid to development which it gives to the poorest countries. The main objective of the Canadian program of co-operation and development is to support the efforts which the developing nations are themselves making to meet the needs of their own people. To that end, the bilateral program will be focused on three priority sectors: agriculture, energy, and human resources development. It is in those three sectors that Canada's resources are best suited to the needs of developing countries. We will be giving priority treatment to those sectors in the coming years.

As far as Canada is concerned, our commitment to development assistance is now well entrenched. Let me simply reiterate the government's policy to allocate to official development assistance 0.5 per cent of our gross national product by 1985 and to do our utmost to achieve the international target of 0.7 per cent by 1990.

As some members well know, I take particular interest in promoting consultations with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), church leaders and business representatives, and I have been impressed by their strong moral and intellectual commitment to the over-all Canadian effort in favour of Third World development. I would like to pay tribute to the impressive work that is carried out by NGOs and the church groups in Latin America, and I would like to repeat the strong commitment of this government to continue supporting financially the initiatives taken by private citizens in this country.

#### Refugee problem

I want just to mention a serious issue which is having an adverse impact on the economic and social development prospects of many developing countries. I refer to the international refugee situation, the dimensions of which are expanding at an alarming rate.

There are now some ten million refugees in different parts of the world and many more millions of internally displaced persons. The situation in Africa, which has witnessed a quintupling of its refugee population in the past few years, is of particular concern and led to the convening of the conference in Geneva in April, in which I participated, on the subject of international assistance to refugees in Africa. At that conference, Canada pledged, in this year alone, a \$22-million contribution towards the longer-term requirements of \$1 billion to assist in humanitarian relief, and local reinstallation and possibly eventual repatriation of the five million refugees in question.

There are also major unresolved refugee situations in Central Asia, in Southeast Asia and in Latin America. These situations, apart from the grave humanitarian problems for the refugees involved, impose economic, social and political burdens on the countries providing asylum which tend to undermine the stability of the countries and regions affected. It is for this reason that Canada, while contributing in a major way to the humanitarian relief effort, has led the international efforts at the United Nations' General Assembly, the UN High Commission for Refugees, the UN Commission on Human Rights, and within the economic summits to address the funda-