

However, Canadian Forces will remain in Europe and the current level of stationed forces will be maintained. Our policy in the short-term will be to pause. We will not continue with our programs to build up our military strength in Europe. We will ensure that we have the resources to respond to appropriate requests for peacekeeping forces whenever they arise, and wherever they are needed.

The pace of rebuilding Canada's military will have to proceed more slowly than we had hoped. But the principles of the Defence White Paper remain the defence policy of the Government, and we remain committed to an improved rate of real growth in defence expenditures over the longer term.

As you will hear in more detail from my colleague, the Minister for External Relations and International Development, another program that the Government decided, reluctantly, must contribute to our deficit reduction is the development assistance program.

There will be reductions in our ODA budget, because the Government has had to examine all programs. Our official development assistance has been the Government's fastest growing program increasing by 7.4 per cent per year over the past four years.

However, I want to assure both our development partners and fellow donors that the Government continues to be firmly dedicated to the delivery of a substantial, high quality development assistance program. We are committed to working with developing countries to help improve the lives of their people.

The only way in which we can continue to more effectively reach out and assist countries of the Third World is if our own economy is healthy and growing from a strong and solid foundation.

Indeed, despite the immediate reductions, our aid budget will continue to grow by as much as ten per cent next year. Most importantly, it will be linked by a formula to the growth of the Canadian economy. Once again, a healthy national economy will enhance our contribution to international development.

We will continue to be one of the more generous donor countries. Our aid program will continue to be one of the very highest quality, reflecting faithfully the new aid strategy the Government published last year. And we will continue to play a role in the UN system, in the Bretton Woods institution, in the Commonwealth and in La Francophonie.