

Now, I've talked about markets for the future. CIDA's activities are also relevant to jobs here and now:

- 65 cents of every CIDA dollar is spent in Canada on Canadian goods and services.
- 30,000 jobs are created in Canada and 6,000 Canadian firms obtain contracts for goods and services from ODA.
- The jobs and contracts flowing from ODA are spread right across the country, from the Maritimes to Western Canada.
- The food aid alone provided by CIDA provides support for the equivalent of 5,000 medium-sized farms across Canada.

Of course, ODA is not to be defended as a make-work project for Canadians. There would be more efficient ways to do that if this were the purpose of ODA. But ODA is not an off-shore give away. It provides jobs in Canada today.

Now, I am not going to claim that ODA is risk free. Or that we always get it right. The risks are high and there have been failures. This is global venture capital. There will be failures - as there are when oil companies dig dry holes. Or when software manufacturers invest millions of dollars in new generations of computer technology.

Of course, CIDA has made mistakes. But we have learned from those mistakes. For example, CIDA now emphasizes human resource development in its aid strategy. Countries will only become developed if its people develop skills. And the multiplier effect of such aid is astounding as those who are trained train others.

Time, frustration and risk should not deter us from pursuing the honourable challenge that is official development assistance. Any more than it deterred the Canadians who had the vision to invest in the St. Lawrence Seaway - or the national railway or the Canadian satellite communications system. Or any more than it stopped the developers and scientists who persisted with a technology developed in the 1920s and turned it into the Syncrude project of today. Or any more than those who first explored and settled this country made an investment in time and money before reaping benefits. Those people recognized patience and persistence were required. ODA is no different.

I believe a broad and active ODA strategy is as integral to the foreign policy of Canada as it is integral to the compassion which infuses the Canadian character. Of course, ODA has had to bear its share of the cuts required over the past two years as part of the government's deficit reduction strategy. But I have always fought to keep those reductions to a level which do not harm the economic and security interests of Canada.