



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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FOOD PROBLEMS OF THE LESS-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

Statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs,
the Honourable Paul Martin, on July 21, 1966, at the
Meeting in Washington, D.C., of the Development Assistance
Committee.

The problems of agricultural production in the developing countries and of the prospective food-gap are extremely difficult and intractable. Their solution will require much more imaginative and vigorous efforts on the part of both developed and developing countries, and I therefore welcome this opportunity to discuss them in the Development Assistance Committee. As a major producer and commercial exporter of foodstuffs, Canada has a vital interest in the relation between future world demand and the supply of food, and also in the implications of the food situation for the economic progress and well-being of the developing countries. The trade aspects are, of course, being discussed elsewhere; in addition, the FAO and the World Food Programme are doing important work on food aid. Nevertheless, the DAC has a distinctive role to play in examining the place of agriculture in economic development and in encouraging adequate responses on the part of both donor and recipient countries. Consequently, Canada can support the draft resolution before us, which sets out the food problems of the developing countries and their implications for assistance policies in donor countries. We are confident that it will serve a useful purpose in focusing attention on a sector which has received insufficient emphasis in the past.

I should like to deal in my remarks with two basic aspects of the problem before us as described in the recommendation -- first, to help the developing countries in the longer run to meet their growing food needs through their own resources, and second, to provide interim food supplies until they are able to do so. The importance of increasing agricultural productivity in the developing countries cannot be overemphasized. It is obvious that the only satisfactory solution lies in helping these countries to acquire the necessary knowledge, technology, resources and will to feed themselves. The Secretariat has performed a useful service in summarizing the task before us. The paper has rightly pointed out the need for effective tools, fertilizers, pesticides and seeds, as well as for related facilities such as the construction of rural roads, the provision of electricity, equipment for irrigation and drainage, and the establishment of suitable marketing arrangements. The members of this Committee can do a great deal to provide the necessary knowledge and what is now referred to in the jargon as "inputs". However, we must