

Such assistance can take many forms.

It can be justified on humanitarian grounds, particularly when there is an urgent and immediate need for relief when natural disasters and man-made conflicts have caused widespread suffering among innocent victims.

Or aid can be of a longer-term nature, aimed at creating self-sufficiency in an economy where none exists. In such cases its aim is to elevate living standards and levels of production in an economy so that development in this economy will eventually become self-sustaining. I hold the view that a special emphasis in the providing of aid should be placed on the needs of the poorest countries in the world and, within them, on the poorest sectors of society.

An aid program can also be viewed as being advantageous from the point of view of the donor country. The result of a sustained and satisfactory relation based on an aid program can be the strengthening of relations between the countries concerned, with long-term benefits for them in a wide variety of fields such as trade, investment, industrial co-operation and cultural exchanges. On my recent visit to Africa, I have seen the results of our substantial aid programs there, in terms of both the benefits to the recipient countries and the warm and friendly relations between Canada and these countries.

My second question concerns the level of aid spending the Canadian taxpayer is prepared to underwrite.

One might think that, in view of our own economic difficulties, people would want to cut back on aid. But in my experience Canadian public support for government spending on foreign aid is strong and growing. In the correspondence I receive, I am urged much more frequently to do more for developing countries than I am to do less.

Canadians are a fortunate people. Our country is one of the wealthiest in the world, both in terms of living standards and in terms of natural resources, including particularly food and energy, two areas which have been focal points of global concern in recent years. As a result, Canadians can afford to be generous, and in my experience they are inclined to be generous, when it comes to our relations with countries of the Third World.

But it is not simply a matter of generosity. We live in an increasingly interdependent world. The well-being of developed countries like Canada is more and more bound up with the fate of the developing world. Our best interests, therefore, require us to assist

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