

CANADA-MAURITANIA RELATIONS

Relations between Canada and Mauritania have not been extensive though they are generally good and cordial. The former President of Mauritania, Mr. Ould Daddah, visited Canada in May 1977. Mauritania has received Canadian food aid and, under a bursary program, a number of Mauritanian students were trained in Canada. Canada and Mauritania extend Most Favoured Nation treatment to each other through their common membership in GATT. Mauritania is eligible to benefit from Canada's Generalized System on Tariff Preferences. No bilateral trade agreement exists between the two countries.

Contacts between Mauritania and Canada have grown through direct bilateral actions, such as visits by officials, and exchanges in multilateral fora like the African Development Bank, la Francophonie and the Sénégal River Valley Development Organization.

Although Mauritania is not a country in which Canada has an active bilateral aid programme, Mauritania has benefitted from Canadian assistance channelled by various means including multilateral institutions. Until recently, Canada provided food aid to Mauritania and assisted in funding an economic project managed by the Centre for Research on Economic Development of the University of Montreal. A bursary program funded by CIDA enabled a number of Mauritanian students to study engineering and management in Canadian universities. As part of its \$2 million contribution to UNICEF to assist the emergency and rehabilitation programmes of African countries, Canada extended in December 1986 a \$500,000 grant to Mauritania as a special initiative taken within the context of CIDA's Africa 2000 Programme.

Trade between Canada and Mauritania has remained modest given the difficult economic situation in Mauritania. Canada has enjoyed a favourable trade balance with Mauritania, exporting mostly wheat and other food products purchased with CIDA credit funds. Certain Canadian companies have explored trade opportunities in Mauritania though trade possibilities will continue to be directly affected by Mauritania's economic situation and pressing economic needs.