

## APPENDIX "A"

SPEECH BY THE HONOURABLE ALLAN J. MACEACHEN  
TO THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE,

ROME NOVEMBER 6, 1974

Mr. President, I wish to join those who have spoken before me to congratulate you on your election to preside over our proceedings. You bring to your high office a range of learning and of experience that bear directly on the matters we have before us. The acclamation by which you were elected expressed the confidence of this conference in your capacity to help us bring our deliberations to a fruitful conclusion.

I should also like to pay tribute to the Secretary General of the Conference. He, too, is no stranger to the problems we shall be surveying. His special credentials are reflected in the quality of the preparatory work that has been done. Given the importance of the conference, there has been all too little time to set the parameters of our discussions. Nevertheless, it seems to my delegation that we have rarely entered upon a conference where the issues have been set out with greater clarity or the solutions with greater realism than in the documents the Secretary General has put before us.

This conference is engaged on a mission to seek the elimination of hunger—man's oldest scourge and the most persistent enemy. Together with the Law of the Sea Conference in Caracas and the world population conference in Bucharest, it is part of a process of reassessment of man's global relationship to the resources that sustain him that may yield us a new consciousness of the global responsibilities carried by every nation and people. We in Canada will not shirk these responsibilities, and are willing to play our part in furthering those common endeavours which bear promise of helping to produce a lasting freedom from want for all mankind—but the endeavours will remain barren if they are not truly common and truly sustained.

Hunger must today be tackled at every level—at the family, village, province, country and region as well as the global level, for no unit of society bears any graver responsibility than that of feeding its people. In our present world community we are everywhere faced with an agonizing awareness of starvation wherever it occurs; and finding means to harness production around the world to alleviate it poses a challenge to our ingenuity as well as to our compassion. We in Canada recognize that our farmers can grow more than they do at present. To that end, we have recently taken several policy initiatives that will not only ensure that producers will have more stable and satisfactory returns, but that they will have a better transport and storage system to get their products to market. We believe that these initiatives will permit Canadian agriculture more nearly to reach its potential. We must however remember that, whatever food may move internationally, most men for the foreseeable future will inevitably remain dependent on the food produced near to their neighbourhood markets.

It is for this reason that Canada emphatically supports the development of increased food production capacity by developing countries as the key to an anti-hunger strategy.

Where opportunities for efficient food production exist my government stands ready to accord it a high priority in our assistance programs. Canada has always been responsive to requests for assistance in this area. We are now carefully re-examining the skills and resources that may exist in Canada suitable for assisting the development of new agriculture and fisheries capacity in developing countries to determine practical ways of making them readily available. We therefore intend to have a matching response for countries who set about energetically to mobilize their internal food production resources and who give a high development priority to efficient food production.

We know from experience that expanding food production on a secure basis is not easy. It demands adaptation of land and water, technology, research, finance, modernized storage and transport facilities, marketing organizations, planning, and government services; all of which may require changes to traditional modes of life. Increased production is also facing barriers arising from supply shortages of certain inputs, notably nitrogenous fertilizers. No *deus ex machina* will remove these impediments overnight, and each country must come to terms with them in its own way. Where Canada can help to make these problems more manageable it will, and it will strive to see access to inputs maintained internationally on an equitable non-discriminatory basis.

The situation of the "vulnerable groups" in food-deprived areas is a reproach to us all. The spectacle of two hundred million malnourished children, and of nursing mothers suffering on a similar scale, makes a mockery of the ideals professed by every society. The malnourished children of today must somehow be enabled to become the wellsprings of tomorrow's prosperity. This conference should determine upon effective ways for directing a greater volume of food to these groups, and make them priority recipients under international food assistance programs. UNICEF and the world food program, not to mention the voluntary organizations who form so much of the vanguard in this struggle, must be given the resources to develop programs to this end which are truly effective. Canada intends to play its full part in this effort.

We cannot ignore the fact that in the immediate future there will be substantially increased demand for food imports in a number of countries that cannot pay for it. The food aid programs of many donor countries have hitherto been facilitated by the existence of "surplus stocks", which are now non-existent. Food aid is consequently falling off just when it is needed most. Yet the people fed by "surplus stocks" cannot be counted "surplus people", and their needs cannot be written off. Canada has seen its commitment to these programs as a commitment to international solidarity and to human compassion. We do not intend to abandon them now. Food aid donors, and indeed all prosperous countries, have an obligation to maintain these flows while emergency conditions persist, and should expand them if possible.