

TAKING ACTION ON AFRICA

At their Summit in Kananaskis, Alberta in 2002, leaders of the G8 countries pledged to support a groundbreaking initiative to rebuild Africa. Nearly two years later, Canada is achieving concrete results in policy forums, long-range programs—and on the ground.

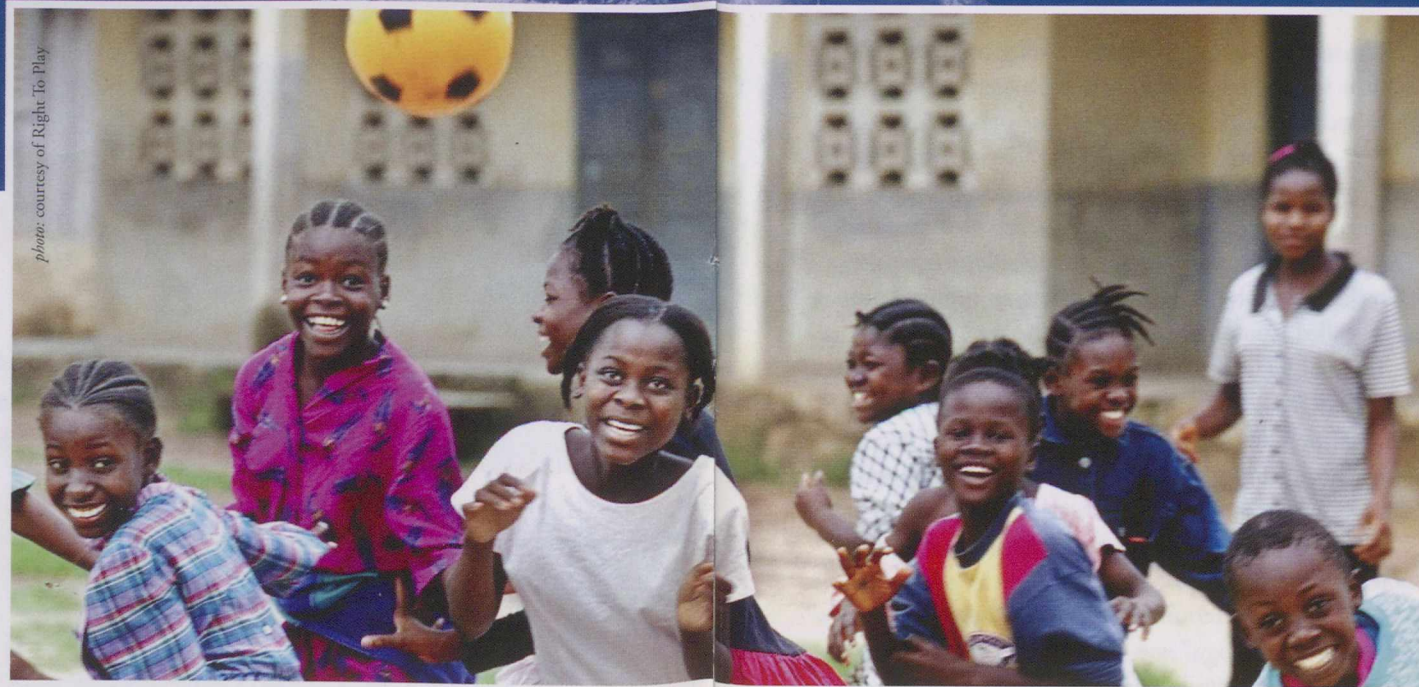
In July 2001, at the G8 Summit in Genoa, Italy, a group of African leaders presented a bold vision to transform their continent from poverty to prosperity. Unlike earlier strategies, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was a made-in-Africa approach that promised to hold the continent's leaders accountable before their people—and the world—for their progress. "Africans declare that we will no longer allow ourselves to be conditioned by circumstance," they stated. "We will determine our own destiny and call on the rest of the world to complement our efforts."

G8 leaders, led by Canada, welcomed the new initiative at their next Summit in Kananaskis, where they approved the Africa Action Plan, a package of more than 100 commitments that addresses such NEPAD priorities as governance, peace and security, education and health, agriculture and water, and trade and investment. "NEPAD represents the best chance in a generation to further Africa's development," says Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Graham. "Canada is leading the international community in responding to this opportunity."

At Kananaskis, the Canadian government launched a number of initiatives in support of the G8 plan, including the \$500-million Canada Fund for Africa, which is focusing on stimulating economic growth and innovation, strengthening African institutions and improving the well-being of African peoples.

A commitment to Africa

Canada's renewed commitment to Africa began long before Kananaskis. In September 2000, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) launched the Social Development Priorities, a five-year plan to increase support for programming in health and nutrition, basic education, HIV/AIDS and child protection. The plan was partly a response to the United Nations Millennium Development



Canada's Right To Play program: teaching leadership and coaching skills and delivering health messages to young Africans.

Goals, a road map to measure the commitment of both donors and developing countries to halve global poverty by 2015. To that end, Canada committed to doubling its investment in basic education in Africa to \$48 million. At Kananaskis this commitment was again doubled to \$100 million by 2005.

In March 2002, at the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico, Canada committed to increasing official development assistance by at least 8 percent every year, doubling the level of Canadian aid by the end of the decade, with half of the new funds allocated to Africa. Canada has also been a leader in debt relief, enabling African governments to devote precious resources to services and economic growth.

At Kananaskis, with the new Canada Fund for Africa and with increases in aid announced at Monterrey, Canada had committed \$6 billion in new and existing resources for Africa over a five-year period. In addition, in the spirit of improving market access, Canada committed to extending duty-free and quota-free access to most imports from the 48 countries the UN calls "least developed countries," 34 of which are in Africa. Moreover, in December 2002, as part of its commitment to strengthen aid effectiveness, CIDA singled out six low-income African countries for additional aid investment: Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Senegal and Tanzania.

Now Canada's commitments to Africa are generating concrete results in a broad range of areas, from political and economic governance and social development to

human security. "Canadians can take pride that they are making a difference in Africa," says Aileen Carroll, Minister for International Cooperation. "There are prospects for real change."

Health

Relatively small investments in primary health care, proper nutrition, clean water and adequate sanitation can reap huge dividends, reducing poverty and improving quality of life. Canada supports such efforts in Africa and is working with other donors and partners on larger-scale programs in areas such as HIV/AIDS research and the eradication of polio. The Canada Fund for Africa is providing \$50 million to support the work of the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative and the African AIDS Vaccine Programme, and a further \$50 million toward the goal of eradicating polio by 2005.

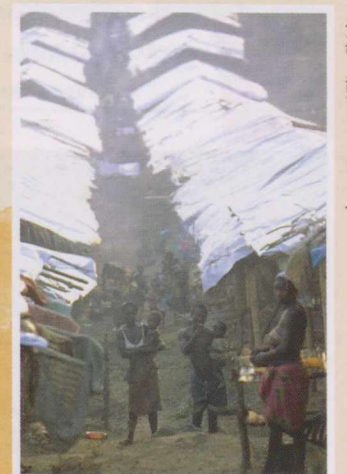
While physical health is crucial for quality of life, emotional well-being is equally important. An international organization based in Toronto called Right To Play is using sport to teach leadership and coaching skills and deliver health messages to young Africans in refugee camps.

Together with two colleagues from Austria and Australia, Right To Play volunteer Grace Miskiewicz ran workshops in Sierra Leone for six months last year for refugees fleeing the violence in neighbouring Liberia. One young woman left a particularly strong impression. "Doris had a disability and walked with a stick for a crutch," Miskiewicz recalls. "When we started the workshops, she was quiet and unsure of herself. You could see her gaining confidence slowly. By the end, she was playing Ultimate Frisbee and volleyball. Nothing stopped her."

AFRICA BY NUMBER

Challenge

- 1 in 2 Africans lives on less than US\$1 a day.
- 45 million African children are not in school.
- More than 26.6 million people are HIV positive.
- 1 in 5 Africans is affected by conflict.
- 14 countries suffer water scarcity; 11 more will join them by 2025.
- About 500 million hectares of land, 65% of it agricultural, has suffered soil degradation since 1950.
- Africa has 13% of the world's population, but about 2% of global trade and 1% of global investments.



Sierra Leone refugee camp

Progress

- Since 1990, 42 of the 49 countries in sub-Saharan Africa have held multi-party elections.
- Tanzania is surpassing its enrolment targets for primary-school-age children and has built some 16,000 new classrooms and more than 2,000 houses for teachers.
- In Uganda, the HIV infection rate has dropped from 14% to less than 8% in the last decade as a result of a national prevention and education program.
- After generations of conflict over water, 10 countries bordering the Nile River have come together to manage this precious resource for the benefit of all, especially the poorest, and the environment that sustains them.



Young student in Niger

Source: *New Vision, New Partnership, The Canada Fund for Africa, 2004*

photo: Satellite image taken by RADARSAT-1, Canadian Space Agency