

### Humanitarian Aid for Southern Africa

The Canadian people, through successive governments, have made it very clear that they abhor the racist and colonialist policies existing in Southern Africa. The present Canadian Government fully shares this view. Reflecting this concern, the Canadian Government has already contributed funds to several programmes of the United Nations and Canadian and international voluntary bodies designed to assist the victims of these policies in Southern Africa. Canadian aid has been channelled mainly to assist refugees from Southern Africa and to provide scholarships. The total amount during the present fiscal year is approximately \$302,000.

The Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Ottawa in August, 1973 agreed on the need to give humanitarian assistance to the indigenous people in Southern Africa struggling to achieve human dignity and the right to self-determination.

In the spirit of the final communiqué of the Commonwealth Conference, the Canadian Government undertook to broaden the current aid programme for the African people residing in Southern Africa.

I announced that we were considering such a programme when I addressed the United Nations General Assembly on September 25, 1973. This new policy would mean helping the people who on a daily basis suffer from racist and colonialist injustices. Under this programme, CIDA would consider requests for contribution from reputable Canadian non-governmental organizations and international bodies for projects of a humanitarian nature in Namibia, Rhodesia, the Portuguese African territories and South Africa. The projects clearly would not be practical without at least the tacit concurrence of the local authorities in the particular regions concerned. Moreover CIDA, in consultation with External Affairs, would also be able to consider requests from Canadian, United Nations and other international bodies for humanitarian aid to (a) peoples in "liberated areas" in Southern Africa and (b) peoples from the white-ruled territories who have taken refuge in adjacent African countries. Here again, no projects would be feasible without the agreement of whoever is in de facto control of a particular area where a project is located.

All such projects would have to be of a humanitarian or developmental nature. We would require firm assurances that the aid is utilized for purely peaceful purposes involving strict accountability by sponsoring bodies for any CIDA funds. There is no intention to make funds directly available to the liberation movements. Under no circumstances would there be any arms or cash granted. As it is intended to help as many Africans as possible who are suffering from injustices, it is obvious that the ultimate recipients will include both those who are politically militant and those who are not. The test is not the political militancy of the recipients but the peaceful and humanitarian nature of the project itself.

To refuse humanitarian aid to people who happen to be politically militant would be discriminatory. I see no reason why Canada should indulge in such discrimination, especially since such people will have a key place in the future of those areas. It would be against Canada's traditions and interests to ignore the needs of these potential leaders in their communities for education, medical care and other basic human requirements.