

CANADA AND AFRICA

Canadians have a long history of involvement and interest in Africa. From the late nineteenth century on, hundreds of Canadians worked in Africa as missionaries, as teachers and physicians, in all regions of Africa. This involvement was largely a product of private endeavours, financed directly by the contributions of individual Canadians.

The forces of change which brought most Sub-Saharan states to independence in the late 1950's and early 1960's also greatly broadened the field of action upon which Canada could pursue its objectives in Africa. The development of government to government relations was encouraged, with the first post-independence diplomatic missions opened in Accra (1957), Lagos (1960), Yaounde (1962) and Dakar (1966).

More recently, two series of events have once again focussed the attention of Canadians on Africa: the increasingly tense situation in Southern Africa and the famine in several parts of Africa. Canadians continued to show keen interest in the affairs of the continent and the Canadian government pursued its efforts to help Africa overcome major problems. In so doing, Canada took advantage of its traditional ties with Anglophone and Francophone countries through such institutions as the Commonwealth and "La Francophonie".

The visit of Prime Minister Mulroney to Africa should therefore be considered in the light of the following particularly important concerns in Canada's current relations with Africa:

- the crisis in Southern Africa;
- the difficult economic situation in Africa; and
- the preparation of both the Commonwealth and "La Francophonie" Summits to be held in Canada in 1987.

CRISIS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

The deterioration of the internal situation in South Africa, and the general increase of tension in the entire region of Southern Africa have been, over the past two years, subjects of constant scrutiny and debate in the media, governments and non-governmental organizations throughout the world.