



several Commonwealth countries and the Commonwealth remains important to Canada as a vehicle for assisting countries in their long-term economic development.

#### **Canadian Aid to Commonwealth Countries**

Canada's worldwide program of development assistance has its roots in the Commonwealth. As a number of countries in Asia shed their colonial status in the late 1940s, it became evident that without intensive economic and social development they would have difficulty in sustaining their political independence. In 1950, Canada joined Australia, Ceylon, Great Britain, India, New Zealand and Pakistan in establishing the Colombo Plan, which until 1958 was Canada's sole bilateral development assistance program.

Commonwealth ties have also determined the pattern and direction of Canada's development assistance program. As Commonwealth countries in the Caribbean and Africa gained independence in the late fifties and early sixties, Canada became involved in development co-operation activities involving them. Today, Canadian development assistance is concentrated in 30 "core" countries, i.e., countries to which Canada has a long-term development commitment and for which it draws on all aid instruments.

In 1985, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) provided assistance to 44 of the 49 Commonwealth countries. Aid on a bilateral basis to Commonwealth countries constitutes close to 20 per cent of Canada's total development assistance program.

In 1986-87 Canada contributed \$16.7 million to the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC), its largest single contributor. A Canadian is the current Managing Director of the Fund, which is based on the premise of mutual help and remains a pioneer in promoting technical co-operation among developing countries. All members contribute financially to its budget. An important instrument for establishing South/South co-operation, it draws over 60 per cent of its experts from developing Commonwealth countries. Training through the Fund is arranged almost exclusively in other developing Commonwealth countries. It has proven consistent in its capacity to respond

quickly, with low administrative overheads, to requests for small-scale technical assistance from member countries.

#### **The Declaration of Commonwealth Principles Issued by Commonwealth Heads of Government, Singapore, 1971**

"The Commonwealth of Nations is a voluntary association of independent sovereign states, each responsible for its own policies, consulting and co-operating in the common interests of their peoples and in the promotion of international understanding and world peace.

"Members of the Commonwealth come from territories in the six continents and five oceans, include peoples of different races, languages and religions, and display every stage of economic development from poor developing nations to wealthy industrialized nations. They encompass a rich variety of cultures, traditions and institutions.

"Membership of the Commonwealth is compatible with the freedom of member governments to be non-aligned or to belong to any other grouping, association or alliance. Within this diversity all members of the Commonwealth hold certain principles in common. It is by pursuing these principles that the Commonwealth can continue to influence international society for the benefit of mankind.

"We believe that international peace and order are essential to the security and prosperity of mankind; we therefore support the United Nations and seek to strengthen its influence for peace in the world, and its efforts to remove the causes of tension between nations.

"We believe in the liberty of the individual, in equal rights for all citizens regardless of race, colour, creed or political belief, and in their inalienable right to participate by means of free and democratic political processes in framing the society in which they live. We therefore strive to promote in each of our countries those representative institutions and guarantees for personal freedom under the law that are our common heritage.

"We recognize racial prejudice as a dangerous sickness threatening the healthy development of the human race and racial discrimination as an unmitigated evil of society. Each of us will vigorously combat this evil