

AS A QUEBEC JOURNALIST PUT IT, WE ARE PERHAPS A PEOPLE CUSTOM-MADE TO HELP AFRICA. WITH ALL OUR RESOURCES AND OUR WEALTH, WE COULD BE THE BIGGEST EGOISTS IN THE WORLD. BUT RIGHT FROM THE BEGINNING, WE HAVE RETAINED OUR SENSE OF SOLIDARITY.

RECENT POLLS SHOW JUST HOW MUCH CANADIANS CARE ABOUT THE PROBLEM OF HUNGER IN THE WORLD. OF ALL THE STATISTICS, I AM PARTICULARLY MOVED BY THE FACT THAT FORTY-FOUR PER CENT OF ALL RESPONDENTS WHOSE INCOME WAS LESS THAN \$10,000 GAVE TO HELP AFRICA.

THOSE PEOPLE WERE AMONG THE MORE THAN 800,000 CANADIANS WHOSE DONATIONS TOTALLED SOME \$60 MILLION. THIS MONEY, MATCHED BY THE GOVERNMENT, CAME FROM TOWNS AND FROM SCHOOLS, FROM PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS AND FACTORY WORKERS, FROM GROUPS AND ASSOCIATIONS OF ALL KINDS. FROM VANCOUVER, WHERE ONE MILLION DOLLARS WERE COLLECTED, TO HALIFAX, WHERE THE ETHIOPIA AIRLIFT TRANSPORTED ESSENTIAL GOODS TO ETHIOPIA. OUR ARTISTS AND OUR JOURNALISTS HELPED BY KEEPING THE CRISIS EVER PRESENT IN OUR HEARTS, AND AT THE SAME TIME, IN AFRICA, PEOPLE WERE WORKING IN THE MIDST OF THE DESOLATION, LIVING IN DAILY CONTACT WITH THE SUFFERING, WORKING AGAINST FATIGUE AND FRUSTRATION AND THE LIMITATIONS OF WHAT COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED IN THE FIELD.

THE CHALLENGE FACED BY THE GOVERNMENT WAS TO TRANSFORM THIS FLOOD OF MONEY, OF IDEAS, OF PROJECTS AND ENERGY, INTO AN ORGANIZED AND EFFICIENT OPERATION. IT WAS THE CHANCE TO PUT OUR PRINCIPLES TO THE TEST. FOR THE FIRST TIME, A NON-GOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE WAS GIVEN THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALLOCATING PUBLIC MONEY FOR AID. THIS COMMITTEE