

CANADA-MALI RELATIONS

Our relations are based essentially on the program of cooperation, which has made Canada one of Mali's main partners in this connection. From an educational support focus at its beginning in 1968, the Canadian program of assistance has over the years turned more toward providing economic aid to rural development, energy, transportation and human resource development. Since 1968, Mali has received a total of \$143 million in Canadian assistance.

The primary objective of the bilateral cooperation program in Mali, which seeks to combat desertification in the Sahel, is to achieve a better socio-ecological balance. This is focussed on three areas of intervention: food equilibrium, protection of the plant cover, and energy equilibrium. The Kaarta project, an ambitious program of integrated rural development aimed at achieving nutritional stability, will alone cost some CDN\$ 25 million.

Support projects in education, human resource development, health and cooperatives involve local population groups in the development projects. Complementing these areas of concentration, the problem of water supply is given special emphasis. Assistance is also being given to the Malian national railway in order to open the country up internally and externally. On the regional level, Canada has helped to finance the Manantali Dam and has assisted in the feasibility studies to develop the Senegal River under the OMVS plan.

Food aid amounting to \$12 million has been provided by CIDA since 1982. Mali has received 15,000 tonnes of corn and 7,000 tonnes of wheat over these three years to help overcome its food deficit. During 1986-87, Canada will help Mali to achieve a balance of payments by a donation of \$4 million worth of wheat.

Politically, our relations with Mali are cordial. It is a member of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation and a partner in La Francophonie. We have exchanged ministerial visits, and bilateral consultations are held periodically.

However, trade between Canada and Mali is practically nonexistent. Our exports are tied with the CIDA program and with the contracts that a few Canadian companies are able to obtain under multilaterally financed aid projects.