



Small States Facility

At the 1985 CHOGM, a proposal was approved that led to the establishment of the Small States Facility — nine Commonwealth countries (mostly island states in the South Pacific, the Indian Ocean and the Caribbean) united through permanent representation at the United Nations. Canada has provided over \$1 million to the facility since 1987.

Langkawi Scholarship Program

In 1989, the Langkawi Declaration on the Environment was endorsed by the Commonwealth Heads of Government in Kuala Lumpur. A year later, CIDA implemented the Langkawi Scholarship Program to underline its commitment to environmental education and the spirit of the Langkawi Declaration. Forty scholarships are granted each year to government officials and other experts in the environmental field to help them learn from the experience of other Commonwealth countries.

Human Rights Unit

At the 1991 CHOGM in Harare, Canada announced a special \$400 000 contribution to the Human Rights Unit of the Commonwealth Secretariat. These funds were used for training and education activities, as well as for the production of publications.

Women's Affairs

In both 1990 and 1993, CIDA provided funds to enable members of government departments responsible for women's issues to attend the Women's Affairs Ministers' Meetings, which are organized every three years by the Commonwealth Secretariat. These contributions were provided in recognition of the need to include day-to-day decision-makers alongside high-level participants at such meetings.

Bilateral Assistance for Africa

Africa remains the least-developed region of the world, with nearly 50 percent of its 500 million people living below the poverty line. Of the 57 African countries receiving Canadian aid, 15 are Commonwealth members.

CIDA's 1992 strategic document *Africa 21* provides the framework for its co-operation program in Africa. Consistent with its fundamental goal of alleviating poverty, CIDA is focusing primarily on supporting democratization and regional integration, and on setting up mechanisms that are likely to foster the spirit of free enterprise in the region. This approach is built upon the recognition of three factors: that long-term sustainable development will not be achieved on the basis of the typical small and fragile African economy; that development activities cannot succeed without popular participation; and that entrepreneurship is essential for economic renewal.

Africa remains a priority for Canada, and continues to receive 45 percent of bilateral assistance, despite budget cuts that were announced on December 2, 1992, in the context of reductions in government spending.

In western Africa — which includes the Commonwealth countries of Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone — CIDA's goal is to establish a sustainable balance between the populations, their economy and their environment. CIDA and its partners have identified a number of themes that could bring about long-term solutions, such as social change (helping Africans to adapt their societies to a changing world while preserving those elements of their culture that constitute a genuine asset in the development process); economic growth resulting from structural adjustment, strengthening of private initiatives and development of a regional infrastructure; rational use of resources in order to reinforce local development efforts; and regional co-operation.