

Take Africa, for example. Canada is held in especially high regard there. Canadians are known for their contribution to famine relief, debt assistance and economic development. When I went to the recent continental conference in Nigeria on African economic recovery, Canada was the only Western country to have been invited to attend. Canada played a leading role, last year, at the UN Special Assembly on African economic recovery. Ambassador Lewis is the Secretary General's special advisor on this very issue. I take considerable pride in seeing our Prime Minister as the only head of government of the Summit Seven to visit Southern Africa since the independence of Zimbabwe. It was a clear manifestation of our appreciation of the plight which front-line states have been facing in continuing attempts by South Africa to destabilise their countries.

Between North and South, between East and West, between developed and developing, from Francophonie to Commonwealth, from the USA to the GATT and the MTN, we are bridge-builders. Few countries can claim as much influence. Few countries are as unselfish in letting others benefit from it.

You will not be surprised, therefore, if I turn to Canadian Official Development Assistance as one of the most critical operational expressions of this influence, on the ground.

You will recall that one of our 1984 campaign commitments was to undertake a full review of official development assistance, as part of the general foreign policy review. The government's position paper which was tabled last week is the culmination of an extensive process of consultation. In fact, we took three cuts at it, through the Simard-Hockin Report in December 1986, then the Senate Committee Report on International Financial Institutions and the Debt Problem of Developing Countries of April 1987, and finally, the May 1987 Winegard or SCEAIT Report to which the document entitled "To Benefit a Better World" is the official government response. I need not, therefore, over emphasize in front of a group such as this, how much this government has taken seriously its commitment towards not only improving the delivery of our aid programs but of ensuring that these rest on rock-solid foundations.