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CANADA'S AID TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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It used to be called "foreign aid". It's more properly named "development co-operation" now and Canadians spend three cents out of every tax dollar on it. It is Canada's part in an international drive to reduce the poverty, under-nourishment and ill health that afflict three-quarters of the world.

There are many reasons why some countries are poor and others rich. In many ways they resemble the reasons for the disparities found within most industrialized nations, including Canada.

Many Third World countries depend on one major crop -- an unreliable economic base because of fluctuating world prices and competition from synthetics. Many are burdened by foreign debt and all suffer from the trade barriers erected by industrialized countries. Developing countries often have an unemployment rate of 20 to 25 per cent, but perhaps their greatest problem of all is the lack of skilled people, from plumbers to planners.

The idea that the more fortunate countries had better pitch in or face the consequences grew out of the various schemes to help put devastated European nations (and Japan) back on their feet after the Second World War.

Development assistance can, however, never fill more than a relatively small part of the developing countries' needs. They themselves have accepted the responsibility for their development and provide most of the resources needed. To do this they are making tremendous sacrifices in the form of economic self-restraint and often drastic changes in their societies.

Canada is one of that privileged group of 20-or-so rich countries able to supplement the developing nations' own resources with know-how and material. The assistance provided by Canada and others is meant to give that extra boost that makes the Third World's own sacrifices worthwhile.

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