

Assistance continued in African countries

Responding to the plight of people in Africa and in an effort to improve conditions there, Canada is actively involved in a number of assistance projects on the continent.

David MacDonald, Canadian co-ordinator for the African famine, toured Africa in December where he led a delegation through areas hard hit by the drought in the north, east, and south of Ethiopia.

"There is a tremendous need for aid in Africa," said Mr. MacDonald. "The famine has left millions of people destitute and the land unable to bear any crops at all," he said.

Christmas airlift to Ethiopia

Canada's Christmas emergency airlift with more than 200 tonnes of relief aid for Ethiopia, arrived as scheduled and the supplies were quickly unloaded and distributed to many starving people in the country.

Marc Lemieux, Canada's ambassador in Addis Ababa, said the airlift went off "absolutely excellently". The supplies "were off-loaded quickly and as efficiently as possible" by the non-governmental agencies responsible for distribution and were then transferred to trucks and smaller planes to reach the more distant areas, said Mr. Lemieux.

Five Air Canada stretch DC-8s, each carrying about 43 tonnes of blankets, tents, medical supplies and high protein food, were sent from Halifax, Montreal and Toronto on Christmas Day and Christmas Eve. The first plane arrived Christmas Eve, two more Christmas Day and the last two on the following morning.

The planes, provided at cost by Air Canada, each carried 18 pallets of supplies worth some \$500 000.

Supplies in Ethiopian relief camps were said to be low and the next regular shipments, by sea, are not expected to arrive until late January or early February.

Money for the airlift was provided by the special African Famine Relief Fund established on November 16, 1984. (See *Canada Weekly*, December 5, 1984).

The cargoes were assembled by Canadian Lutheran World Relief, the Mennonite Central Committee, World Vision Canada, Food for the Hungry, the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, Oxfam Canada, Cancross, UNICEF, Cardinal Léger and the Ethiopia Airlift Group.

Medical teams

The Kinsmen Club of Kingston, Ontario is sponsoring the team of four doctors, eight nurses and eight support people who will establish a "modest" medical centre during



David MacDonald, the Canadian co-ordinator for the African famine, has toured in many areas of Africa to assess the situation there.

their four-week visit. Team members, most of whom are taking leaves of absence without pay, will fly to Ethiopia in January or February.

The Kinsmen also hope to send a second team of 20 to continue work at the medical centre to be set up by the first group. It is expected that the centre will be established at Bati Camp where 30 000 Ethiopian refugees are now living. The camp is about 425 kilometres north-east of the capital of Addis Ababa.

"Child Survival Revolution" support

Canada will increase its contribution to the United Nations Children's Fund's (UNICEF) Special Appeal for Africa by an additional \$3 million.

The increase from \$1.25 million to \$4.25 million in Canada's grant was announced by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. It will be drawn from Canada's \$50-million Special Fund for Africa and it will help support relief and rehabilitation projects benefiting women and children in 13 drought-stricken countries, including Ethiopia, Chad and Mozambique. The money will be aimed at establishing programs designed to provide a foundation for longer-term development.

The new UNICEF child health care strategy, which is being called the "Child Survival Revolution", is based on important advances in the health field that are targeted on malnutrition, infection and diarrhea — the major causes of death among the world's children.

According to UNICEF's annual publication, *The State of the World's Children*, new

low cost techniques could reduce by half the approximately 40 000 child deaths that occur daily in developing countries. Oral rehydration therapy has been especially successful in reducing deaths due to diarrhea. It has been described in the medical journal *Lancet* as "potentially the most important medical advance of the century".

Canada is one of the largest contributing governments to UNICEF's relief and development activities which benefit children throughout the developing world. In 1983-84, total Canadian contributions to UNICEF amounted to \$31.8 million.

Additional food aid

David MacDonald has also announced new food aid initiatives for African people suffering from drought and hunger in Niger, Mali and Chad, and additional funds for Ethiopia.

An increase of \$2.5 million will be added to the initial \$4 million already dedicated directly to Ethiopia, as well as allocations of \$5 million for Niger, \$3 million for Mali and \$3 million for Chad.

"Canadian and international attention has been focused on Ethiopia," said Mr. MacDonald "but drought and famine conditions have struck at least 15 African countries." Mali, Niger and Chad are recognized as three of the countries which are suffering most severely from these extreme conditions. Food aid is also required to mitigate the prospect of famine conditions in these countries.

The \$5 million to Niger will be used for the purchase and delivery of some 10 000 tonnes of cereals and will also cover the internal transportation costs. In Mali, the funds will be used for about 7 000 tonnes of cereal.

Mr. MacDonald visited Niger and Mali in January to evaluate the progress of Canadian and international assistance programs to these countries.

Technical aid

A memorandum of understanding governing a new Canadian program of technical assistance to the African Development Bank and Fund was signed in December in Abidjan. Minister for External Relations Monique Vézina announced that the Canadian government would make a \$7-million contribution, in the form of a grant, to fund this program. It will be spread over four years.

The program will cover three types of activity: assigning Canadian technical assistants and consultants to the bank's head office in Abidjan; training and involving African experts or local consultants in conducting pre-investment and pre-feasibility studies on the financing of projects in Africa; and training African managers.