

The importance of these factors is reflected in a number of studies in which the Canadian Government is at present engaged. Influences on movements of population within Canada, particularly to major urban areas, are being examined. We are endeavouring to understand better the consequences of urban concentration and are searching for ways to improve the quality of urban life. An attempt is being made to balance conflicting demands for rural and urban land-uses. And we are assessing the characteristics and consequences of immigration. Canada also realizes the basic importance of rational policies at national levels as building-blocks to any global response to population trends. Our experience has made us aware of the diversity of population problems to be faced. We realize there are no simple answers and that these problems are closely related to broader economic and social forces.

Canada's preparations for this conference reflect the growing appreciation by Canadians of the complexity of population issues. Our perspectives are also based on a number of preparatory activities. These include public seminars and discussions in our universities and in other public forums. They include a series of public consultations initiated by the Federal Government that stimulated a wide range of thoughtful and concerned opinions. These are complemented by consultations between federal and provincial authorities that established new levels of awareness of the need for a comprehensive approach to population issues in Canada.

Today we approach this meeting acutely mindful that, in a brief two-week period, this conference must deal with some very fundamental questions about relations between population and development, natural resources, the environment and the family. It is our hope that this exercise will lead to improved understanding of these questions and ultimately to the identification of effective national policies.

Canadian position

Canada considers that certain aspects of the issues on the agenda before us are of primary importance. We consider population factors to be closely related to other aspects of the development process, and we recognize that measures both to influence and contend with population trends include structural and institutional change.

Our program of international development assistance in the population field has been channelled almost exclusively through multilateral agencies. While we have not been active bilaterally, we are now