

dimensions of the current world food problems but also begun effective action to provide short-term food aid, expand agricultural development and research programs and put in place institutional arrangements which will assist in long-term solutions.

The most recent information available to the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations indicates that the short-term threat of famine has eased in the countries most seriously affected by food shortages and economic difficulties. Pledges of food aid by a number of producer countries, including Canada, have reduced the short-term requirement for food imports by the 33 countries identified by the FAO as the most seriously affected. Current import requirements total about four million tons, compared to 7.5 million tons in November 1974. While world production of grain fell by four per cent in 1974 and production of rice by one per cent, early indications are that there will be a substantial rise in grain production in 1975. Nevertheless, a world food emergency continues. Dr. A.H. Boerma, Director-General of FAO, stated as recently as a month ago, that the gap between production and supply remains "especially critical" and the international community must act with the greatest possible speed to relieve immediate distress and develop longer-term approaches.

Against this background it is the purpose of this statement to announce how Canada will fulfil the pledge made to the World Food Conference for a program of greatly increased food aid to relieve immediate distress, and to indicate the Government's resolve to place increased emphasis and hence a larger proportion of Canadian development assistance funds into agricultural and rural development projects, including fisheries.