

Within recent weeks, the Government of Canada has embarked on an effort to increase the funds it will make available for development assistance. As you know, since 1978 the proportion of our gross national product allocated for assistance had declined. That trend has now been reversed, and we have set a goal of .5 per cent of GNP for development assistance by the middle of this decade, rising to .7 by the end of the decade. This, of course, will result in increased benefits to Commonwealth countries.

It is no secret that the provision of higher levels of official assistance to developing countries does not always receive universal acceptance in Canada. As with most developed countries at the present time, we face a number of short-term political and economic difficulties. Too many people have come to view international development as a matter of charity, rather than recognizing the interdependent nature of today's world. Too many of us have ignored the fact that there cannot be real stability and security in a world in which so many nations remain dangerously vulnerable to economic uncertainty and unable to meet the development aspirations of their people. In brief, as I pointed out at the Special Session of the General Assembly in August, we would delude ourselves if we believed we realistically had other options. To attempt to preserve entrenched privilege is by far the costliest approach in anything but the shortest term, compounding our problems for the future and resulting in further insecurity and instability.

The resolution of some of these difficulties lies also with some of the developing countries themselves. It is difficult to generate support in developed countries for increased aid when some developing countries have so far failed to build structures and develop programmes which ensure that there will be more social justice resulting when the time comes to distribute the benefits of international aid.

But in meeting both of these major objectives - gaining more sensitized public support for increased aid and achieving a higher level of social justice in developing countries - the Commonwealth can play a key institutional role, a role that the Heads of Government of Commonwealth countries have recognized for some years. For example, the 1979 meeting of Heads of Government resulted in quite explicit statements about the validity of these goals, as well as the overall goals necessary for a more just economic order. It is particularly interesting that many of the