

Halifax Initiative's program.

OXFAM-Canada, which is a member of the Halifax Initiative, also works closely with OXFAM International (OI), a cooperative effort of the OXFAM family world-wide that includes a strong measure of policy advocacy. Currently, OXFAM International has a strong focus on IFI reform and debt relief. Its objectives are to increase civil society's participation in policy dialogue and decision-making, change World Bank policies to increase poor people's access to productive resources, and to make improved access to health services and education a specific objective of Bank policies. On debt reduction, its goal is full implementation of the "Highly Indebted Poor Countries" (HIPC) Initiative, adopted by the World Bank/IMF in October 1996, for the maximum number of countries in a shortened time frame. OXFAM-Canada has worked on this issue, again through the Halifax Initiative, on a letter-writing campaign to the Minister of Finance and through the media. Canada has played an important role in supporting the HIPC Initiative but recently some NGOs have raised questions about whether Canada could do more to accelerate the pace of relief.

As noted in the section on Human Rights, the Canadian Labour Congress gives a great deal of its resources for research and advocacy to issues of trade and investment. Its International Affairs Department has a full-time NAFTA desk and its Social and Economic Policy Department provides significant research capacity to work in this area. The focus is not only on NAFTA but on the social and economic impact of economic integration generally, whether it is in NAFTA, APEC, the WTO, or the new Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). The CLC is careful to state that it is not opposed to increased trade but argues for a framework that makes social progress the principal goal. Its main proposal is for a social clause in trade agreements that would guarantee freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, a minimum working age, employment and pay equity, and abolition of forced labour. The CLC NAFTA Desk publishes a monthly newsletter, *The morning NAFTA / ActuALENA*. The CLC has also published fact sheets, educational material, and in-depth research studies in this area.

Among the church-based groups, the Ecumenical Coalition on Economic Justice takes the lead on these issues. ECEJ has published a book, *Turning the Tide*, on the finance sector globally and in Canada, on the theme of bringing finance under international control. It is currently preparing for a campaign to promote the Tobin tax as a method to check destabilizing financial flows in the international economy. This will begin in July 1997. ECEJ works on monitoring the impacts of the NAFTA and is also working on APEC as well as the Multilateral Agreement on Investment currently under negotiation within the OECD.