

Helping the Health Sector

The Washington conference participants also agreed that alleviating medical shortages is an important priority. Shortly after the conference concluded, Canadian National Defence aircraft delivered \$8 million worth of medicine and medical supplies to the region in a relief effort co-ordinated by the Canadian Red Cross.

Hospital partnerships were proposed by conference participants to improve conditions and training at hospitals. Canada has contributed \$750 000 to one such project underway at the 600-bed Children's Hospital No. 1 in Kiev, Ukraine. The departments of paediatrics at the University of Alberta in Edmonton and Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., are working together to treat children affected by the

Chernobyl nuclear disaster and to train doctors. Canada's project director, Dr. Ernest McCoy, says some 100 physicians from across Canada will help create a model paediatric centre.

Toward Lisbon

The Washington conference played a key role in identifying priorities and galvanizing action among an increasing number of donor nations to successfully see the new countries of the former Soviet Union through their first critical winter of independence. With agreement that the most lasting contribution to be made is the transfer of expertise on market economies and democracy, promising progress has already been made in the priority sectors of food and agriculture, energy, health and shelter. ■

LISBON CONFERENCE

A new, long-term alliance was forged in May, when 12 countries of the former Soviet Union met with representatives from more than 60 nations, including Canada, in Lisbon, Portugal.

The countries met to review aid efforts launched by a global coalition of governments and international organizations in Washington last January, and to plan for future action.

Delegates agreed that co-ordinated, international actions to encourage stability have produced positive overall results so far. Emergency shipments of food and medicine helped people get through an uncertain winter.

Meeting the urgent need for ongoing, long-term assistance is the next challenge, said Barbara McDougall, Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs and co-chair of the conference's food working group.

In an address to the conference, the Minister said concerted efforts to provide ongoing aid must be matched by reforms in Russia and the other

countries. She urged that new arrangements for international co-ordination follow the World Bank model.

Conference participants applauded the decisions of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to accept the former Soviet states as members and to play a central role in the move to market economies. As well, an international currency stabilization fund will be established to assist in efforts to make the ruble convertible.

Nuclear safety in the region proved a key concern among delegates. McDougall reiterated Canada's strong support for safeguarding efforts and pledged to share its considerable nuclear expertise.

The delegates agreed that technical assistance should be the essential component of future aid, particularly in the agriculture, health, housing and energy sectors.

The next meeting is planned for the autumn in Japan. ■