

Canada has long been a proponent of grains arrangements that would augment world food security, and of other measures to this end. At last year's FAO conference, Canada supported the principle of a voluntary undertaking on world food security, and since then has participated actively in the consideration of alternative texts. The voluntary undertaking that is before the conference contains a framework of objectives whose attainment would be a significant world achievement. Canada endorses the undertaking, and will, once suitable country coverage and implementation arrangements have been concluded, become a party to it. We must not blind ourselves, however, to the fact that much work remains to be done, particularly among the countries chiefly concerned, to make meaningful food security a reality. In this demanding and detailed task Canada will participate fully.

World food security in its broadest sense can only be attained by the prudent management of food supplies at every level -- a situation where governments, growers and traders in every country use their best judgment and foresight to assess probable needs and supplies. Canada has provided a key element in world food security in the past through its supply management and maintenance of stocks. This task is one we should be happy to share more widely. Improved information can play a big role, and we hope to see all the countries at this conference contribute extensively and accurately to the proposed Early Warning System. Food-importing countries have an evident self-interest in improving their storage capacity, which would augment world security. On a longer-term basis, security is most likely to come from providing producers and traders with stable expectations of a financial return commensurate with the value of their product -- a value which few people anywhere today would be inclined to question.

Two allied international fields of concern are inextricably bound up with the food problem -- international trade and the preservation of the environment. Canada has long supported a general liberalization of trade in food products, in order to encourage the efficient producer and thereby provide more abundant food at reasonable prices. This is one of our main objectives in the impending trade negotiations in Geneva. We recognize that certain food-importing countries face an enormous challenge in meeting their bills in the short and medium terms, and that this dilemma arises in some respects from factors beyond their control. This payments problem extends into every aspect of the economies of the countries concerned, however, and it is principally through general financial measures, including those taken within the IMF or IBRD, that Canada would expect to see this problem attacked. We are confident that the Geneva trade negotiations will follow the