

# Canada Weekly

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## Canada's relations with the countries of Africa

*The following excerpts are from an address by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Allan J. MacEachen, to the fifth Annual Conference of the Canadian Association of African Studies at York University, Toronto, February 19:*

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Our first concern regarding Africa is precisely the same as in every other area of the world, namely, the cultivation of mutually beneficial relations with the nations of the continent, who have undertaken to recast their ancient cultures in the framework of modern statehood....

...There are people who still question the wisdom of giving aid, in view of our own economic difficulties, not to mention the relative prosperity of some of those whom we are aiding. "What do we get out of it?" they ask. The answer to this is that in today's world we have no real alternative. To quote the report entitled *Partners in Development*, written by the Commission chaired by L.B. Pearson: "The simplest answer to the question is the moral one: that it is only right for those who have to share with those who have not."

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...This year we have allocated \$195 million of public funds for our bilateral programs in the independent countries of Africa, namely over 40 per cent of our bilateral aid budget. Of this figure, about \$85 million took the form of grants and the rest that of concessional loans. We will also be providing almost \$60-million worth of food aid to Africa this year. An additional \$26 million has been channelled into Africa through multilateral agencies such as the UNDP, the World Bank, and the African Development Bank, as well as non-governmental organizations such as the World Council of Churches. I should also refer to the special assistance program which we have undertaken in the Sahelian region of West Africa. This special program provides for disbursements over the next five years of some \$230 million. These disbursements are certainly justified by the magnitude of the problems found in that region of Africa, most of which are directly related to the severe drought

suffered there since 1968. Canada has played its part in meeting the immediate needs of the people stricken by this drought. What remains to be done now is a long-term effort, aimed at finding and implementing permanent solutions, in co-operation with the other aid agencies to the severe setback the drought has meant for the development of the Sahel.

There is a third element, however, which has a special relevance to Africa. That is our concern for human rights and dignity and self-determination. For a quarter of a century successive Canadian governments have condemned racial injustice and colonialism as they have been practised in Southern Africa. The situations prevailing in that area have in our opinion been totally unacceptable and an affront to the conscience of the world.

Our policies in this field have been dismissed by domestic critics as being mere rhetoric. But this is far from the case.

For example, we consider our bilateral aid programs in the independent countries of Southern Africa such as Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland show where we stand in relation both to them and to the white-ruled minority regimes.

We have also channelled substantial sums into the various multilateral institutions such as the United Nations and its specialized agencies and the Commonwealth secretariat, which are carrying on humanitarian programs in this area.

Finally, we have initiated a policy of expanded humanitarian assistance in Southern Africa. Funds are given in the form of matching grants to Canadian non-governmental organizations and international bodies which have existing projects of this kind in Southern Africa. Assistance is being provided, for example, to an educational and health centre in Lusaka, a health centre in the Chiweshe Reserve in