

Africa

Building on the partnership for development approach launched at the Lyon Summit, Africa will be a major theme at Denver.

Africa is a vast continent of 700 million people, 1,000 languages and cultures and 53 countries. It is a continent of great physical diversity, natural wealth and human potential. At the same time, many African countries — particularly in the sub-Saharan region — are extremely poor and in enormous need of social development, infrastructure, services, training and education.

Canadian approach

Canada's approach flows from the three objectives outlined in the government's 1995 foreign policy statement, *Canada in the World*.

- Fundamental Canadian values are served by helping the poor.
- Canadian security is enhanced by making Africa more secure and stable.
- An increasingly prosperous Africa will benefit Africans and Canadians through growing trade and investment.

For many years Canada has supported African development. In fact Africa receives almost half of Canada's official development assistance. As early as 1987, Canada wrote off all debt to sub-Saharan countries resulting from previous aid loans and has used grants to provide all subsequent aid. Consistent with the debt relief terms agreed to by the Paris Club of creditor countries, Canada has also forgiven over \$1 billion in export credits originally extended by the Canadian Wheat Board and the Export Development Corporation, including to many countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Canada is participating in further international efforts to reduce the debt of low-income countries.

Approximately 95 per cent of exports from the least-developed countries of sub-Saharan Africa enter Canada duty-free and the average tariff rate for all African countries is 0.67 per cent. In 1996, Canada reduced preferential rates of duty on over 3,000 products from developing countries and broadened General Preferential Tariff coverage.

The Denver context

The Denver Summit is expected to focus on practical and concrete ways to encourage sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa. It will build on the development partnership, outlined at Lyon, among developing countries, developed countries and multilateral institutions.