



## MOROCCO BECKONS by Bruno Picard

Among the more prominent reminders of Morocco, especially at Christmas-time are the clementines bearing the little black "Maroc" stickers that grace the shelves of our grocery stores. Of course, there is more to Morocco than clementines. The very mention of the Moroccan imperial cities, Marrakesh, Fez and Meknès, evokes a sense of wonderment. Indeed, "Casablanca" has been inscribed in our popular culture by the Humphrey Bogart movie. Similarly Tangiers, Agadir and Ouarzazate conjure up images of adventure and distant, exotic places.

Morocco, a country of cool air but a hot sun, serves as a link between the European and Muslim Arab civilizations. Despite a tumultuous history, it has never allowed invasion by foreign cultures, and has developed a distinct personality and unique traditions. You can easily imagine what a fascinating adventure discovering Morocco was during our posting to Rabat, especially since we were privileged to lift a corner of the veil of this secretive, albeit very hospitable country.

Morocco is also one of Canada's major partners in the Arab world. Currently our foremost customer in Africa, Morocco regards Canada as a bridge to America and an economic alternative to Europe, where traditional outlets are shrinking. The availability of North American technology expertise in French, direct air links, and the large student and permanent Moroccan population in Canada facilitate this tie.

In combination with the respect enjoyed by Canada, and its increasingly important international role, our country is an ideal partner for Morocco which is seeking to

modernize, to become more democratic, and to liberalize its economy.

In short, from a professional as well as a personal viewpoint, Morocco has been an absolutely marvelous post for our entire family - the kind one rarely finds these days!



*Genevieve Picard at  
Agadir*

## REPORT: THE AFRICAN ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS

The original abstract *Towards an African Solution* was delivered in Cairo, Egypt, December 1985, to the First African Ministerial Conference On The Environment by Mostafa Kamal Tolba.

The consequences of Africa's environmental crisis are integral to a fundamental issue. What is the impact on society, the economy, agriculture, and energy resources? The environmental crisis is seldom recognized as both an essential factor in past problems, and potential opportunity for the country.

The environmental crisis is the result of a combination of complex factors: rapid population growth, an unfavourable international economic situation, harsh climatic conditions, and frequently, unsustainable development policies. Fuel wood provides over 80% of Africa's energy. Yet the forests are shrinking by four million hectares per year. In some countries in West and Central Africa the rate is slowing because there is virtually no tree cover left.

Many species of wild animals and plants are threatened and some are on the verge of extinction. Overuse and misuse of Africa's ancient and fragile soils causes soil erosion on a catastrophic scale. Over 60% of the land area north of the equator is susceptible to erosion. Over the last 100 years a 150 km-wide belt of productive land on the southern edge of the Sahara Zone turned completely unproductive. Since 1968, one quarter of Africa's semi-arid pasturelands has also been rendered unproductive. Africa's rich fishing grounds are over-fished and coastal regions are threatened by pollution. Africa's river systems face increasing pressure from pollution, watershed destruction and overuse. Africa's renewable resources are deteriorating at an alarming rate.