

On October the 24th Canada, along with 135 other countries, will observe United Nations' Day, as a reaffirmation of our support for the United Nations' concept.

Beginning this year, however, the day will also be known, by unanimous decision of the General Assembly, as World Development Information Day.

It is perhaps significant that the assembly did not call it simply World Development Day, but World Development Information Day. It is in the words of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the French Minister of Finance, who suggested that the day be observed, "not an appeal for funds" but "the time, once a year, to reflect upon and inform (ourselves) about the vast dimensions of the development problem".

We should have little trouble in grasping those dimensions. Seldom have we been more conscious of our global interdependence. Decisions and events in far corners of the globe are having a direct effect on our cost of living and our daily lives.

Our own concerns with price stability, and with assuring adequate supplies of essential commodities make us realize the plight of the low-income countries, which are so much less self-reliant than we are. The term "low-income countries" must be taken literally. In 21 of them the average income per person is less than \$100 -- that is per year, not per month! In another 50 countries it is less than \$500.

Some 90 percent of the people (nearly two billion human beings) in rural areas of the developing world are still without medical care. Of every 100 newborn children in these countries, 40 will never reach the age of six. Another 40 risk growing up crippled or retarded -- or both. Only three out of the 100 will get enough education to make them fully productive citizens.

The almost chronic international economic ills that beset our world and affect our very livelihood are partly caused by the fact that one-third of the world's population commands two-thirds of its wealth; the other two-thirds of the people must do with what is left.

A century ago such inequities existed within many industrialized nations, including Canada, and many still persist, but we have largely succeeded in overcoming the worst inequalities at home. The same means that raised our own living standards -- economic organization, enlightened social policies, and technology -- can also overcome the soul-destroying poverty in the low-income countries of Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America.

They can't do it alone, and we can't do it alone. It can only be done by co-operative action, helping the developing countries to put their own assets to work.

The United Nations is deeply involved in this challenge, and so is Canada. I hope all Canadians will use October 24, World Development Information Day, as a take-off point to inform themselves of the realities of international development.