



# Statements and Speeches

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## CANADA AND AFRICA

A Speech by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, to the Fifth Annual Conference of the Canadian Association of African Studies, Toronto, February 19, 1975.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak to you on the subject of Canada and Africa.

One of the aims of my Department is to promote closer contact and dialogue between those who are looking at international affairs from the academic standpoint and those of us who have to make daily recommendations and decisions in this field. It is important for us to obtain and be aware of different viewpoints in order to give our decisions the soundest possible basis. With this in mind, I should like to discuss tonight the basic principles motivating our policy towards Africa.

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. Of course, the first prerequisite of fruitful interchange between nations is the maintenance of peace, and this is why the Canadian Government supports the general peacekeeping role of the United Nations and, as well, the work of the regional bodies directed toward the removal of sources of friction between African states.

Recent developments indicate that the impoverished and the deprived are not likely to remain for long in a peaceable frame of mind; their patience is wearing thin. Consequently, there is a direct link between our concern for peace in Africa and our concern for social justice. The foreign policy review of 1970 made social justice, along with peace and security, two of the most important of our six policy objectives. It also made it clear that social justice is to be pursued largely through development assistance. There are people who still question the wisdom of giving aid, in view of our own economic difficulties, not to mention some improvement in the incomes of some of those we are aiding. "What do we get out of this?" 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 the late Lester B. Pearson:

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"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."

This report adds:

"Even in the best conditions, development will be untidy, uneven and ridden with turmoil. Great forward movements in history usually are. The thing to remember is that the process, global in scope and international in nature, must succeed if there is finally to be peace, security and stability in the world. If the developed nations wish to preserve their own position in that world, they must play their full part in creating a world order within which all nations, and all men, can live in freedom, dignity and decency. In short, we face an essential need and an unprecedented opportunity. International development is a great challenge of our age."

In the opinion of the Government of Canada, these words are even more convincing today than when they were written five years ago. And they underline our interest in partnership and co-operation with developing countries.

Our involvement in development assistance in Africa is substantial. 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 shall 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 like also to refer to the special assistance program 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 tried to play 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.

Sometimes our policies in this field have been dismissed by some critics as mere rhetoric. But that 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 to them and to the white-ruled minority regimes.

We have also channelled substantial sums into 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 that have existing projects of this kind in Southern Africa. Assistance is being provided, for example, to an educational and health centre in Lusaka, to other health centres in the Chiweshe Reserve in Rhodesia, and for educational, medical and agricultural equipment in Angola and Mozambique. Our record for many years shows convincingly where we stand. We have condemned, and shall continue to condemn, racism and colonialism in Southern Africa.

Developments in Southern Africa during the last year give some hope that the situation may significantly improve. Events in the Portuguese territories have been so rapid and so dramatic that they emphasize how unwise it is to be dogmatic. We are gratified and encouraged by the decolonization process undertaken by the Portuguese Government. Very few people foresaw such changes as have occurred in Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique during the past year. No one can be certain what will be the situation in the remainder of Southern Africa one year from now. However, there are indications that the South African Government is seriously attempting to improve its relations with its neighbours by peaceful means. As part of this effort, the South Africans appear to be

pressing Ian Smith to seek a settlement of the Rhodesian problem with the African nationalists. We believe that, to some extent, these initiatives of the South African Government are a belated response to the pressures that Canada and other countries have exerted on South Africa. In our view, such pressures would have been less effective if we had chosen to have no truck or trade with the South Africans and severed our diplomatic relations with them, as some of our critics have suggested. We should hope, moreover, that these efforts by South Africa to seek better external relations would be accompanied in the future by determined efforts to eliminate racial injustices at home.

As you know, the broadening of Canada's African diplomacy is recent but has been quite rapid. It was not until 1957 that we established our first full-fledged diplomatic mission in Black Africa. Prior to that, we had representation in South Africa and a trade office in what is now Zaire. There are now Canadian missions in the following countries of the Maghreb and *francophon* Africa: Senegal, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Zaire, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, as well as smaller offices in Niger, Mali and Upper Volta. In Commonwealth Africa, we have resident high commissions in Nigeria, Ghana, Zambia, Tanzania and Kenya. Finally, we have embassies in Ethiopia and South Africa. Most of these diplomatic missions are accredited to one or more other countries. In total, we have resident or non-resident accreditation to every country of Africa with the single exception of Equatorial Guinea.

The majority of our External Affairs personnel in these posts are spending some of their time on development-aid matters; in addition, there are 16 CIDA field representatives attached to these missions. About 850 Canadian experts are now in Africa on CIDA contracts of every conceivable type, and some 500 representatives of CUSO (Canadian University Services Overseas) and of its French language equivalent are posted in African countries. Another 50-odd Canadians are working in Africa on behalf of the Canadian Executive Service Overseas -- a very useful organization through which senior Canadians provide their expertise to the developing countries at minimal expense. In total, therefore, we have nearly 1,500 Canadians working on development in Africa.

The involvement of provincial governments is an interesting feature of the Canadian presence in Africa. They have already displayed their interest in the continent and their willingness to participate further in Canada's international development programs. They possess important resources both technical and managerial and their support for Canada's aid program in Africa is extensive. They work in close harmony with CIDA to recruit teachers and experts. Quebec is at present in the vanguard of this involve

ment, and participates with CIDA in four important projects in Africa. This demonstrates how all levels of government in this country can work together abroad.

I must point out, however, that most of our missions in Africa are still quite small; their staffs are hard-pressed to discharge their responsibilities, particularly in regard to countries of non-residence. For example, our ratio of aid supervisors to aid administered is far out of line with some other countries, particularly the United States. Moreover, the responsibilities of our missions go well beyond administering aid. The number of Canadian visitors to Africa is rapidly increasing, with attendant consular problems. And with increasing visits of businessmen, technical experts and advisers, the question of trade and cultural exchange has taken on a new dimension.

Yet some people ask: "Why are we in Africa at all?" The short answer is that Canada cannot afford to isolate itself from what André Malraux has accurately described as one of the greatest events of the twentieth century -- the emergence of hundreds of millions of Africans to self-government and independence. We Canadians are an outward-looking people, conditioned to be so because our very existence depends on the outside world; and, when we look eastward, we must look to Africa as well as Europe.

Our two official languages are also the two European languages used most frequently in Africa. The Government's language policy is a distinct asset in this continent, and I'm told that the bilingual nature of Canada is well reflected in the linguistic background of the young Canadians working there. I should add that Canada has achieved a fairly high level of technological competence; and technology is an essential ingredient of development.

Even if the passage of time has eased some of the post-independence strains between African states and their former colonial masters, there are still quite a few situations where governments would prefer to deal with a country like Canada that has no colonial past; and, if I may add a personal note, I have the feeling that our response has not always met with the expectations of the Africans. As they say on Madison Avenue, we must try harder; and I intend to try harder.

I turn briefly to the wider political and cultural framework of Canada's African diplomacy.

Since the 1950s, Canadian participation in the United Nations and in the Commonwealth has been a basic element in our foreign policy;

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in the 1960s, La Francophonie was added to this framework. The multilateral connections between Canada and the African states forged in these various bodies had the natural result of causing us to develop our bilateral relations with the countries involved

Today our relations with Africa are perhaps entering a new phase. We must continue to support the three multilateral bodies I have mentioned. On the other hand, we cannot afford to regard the African states simply as emanations of some multilateral institutions of which we are both members.

The point I wish to make is that, in developing our policies, it is now essential for us to consider the particular needs, aspirations and circumstances of each of the African countries with which we have diplomatic relations. We are now more aware than previously of the necessity of balancing our relations with these countries by placing more emphasis on bilateral matters and looking at areas of mutual interest other than aid and technical co-operation. I'm thinking of general policy consultations, cultural affairs, and broader economic co-operation. This adjustment will require us to demonstrate both flexibility and imagination. In each case we shall be required to estimate both our own resources and the particular problems of the individual African country concerned. It is only in this way that we shall be better able to organize aid programs, to expand business relations and to promote successfully those policies (for example, in the environmental field and the law of the sea) that we Canadians regard as particularly important.

The furtherance of such bilateral relations is going to require more effort in Africa on our part than we have previously been able to make. But we must do this without in any way sacrificing the multilateral ties that have proved so valuable to Canada in the past and that we intend to continue to strengthen.

Obviously, a balance must be struck in the scale of priorities on both sides and, naturally, such a balance is, in fact, struck by the daily process of diplomatic activity. Canadian interests in Africa would hardly be enhanced if our Government were to allow our relations with the United States, Japan and Europe to deteriorate. In a very real sense, it is the very robust network of relations -- political, economic, technical and cultural -- that Canada has developed with other industrialized countries that gives us the means to cultivate a more substantial *rapprochement* with the emerging states of the world, in Africa as elsewhere. But I foresee nothing in the future that is likely to lessen the Canadian presence in Africa. On the contrary, all present indications are that we must continue to increase our activity in this

field -- subject, of course, to the resource constraints. In this respect, I should certainly expect a substantive contribution from Canada's Africanists - particularly on the more fundamental forces that will orient Africa's growing participation in world affairs. It is no secret that ominous gaps are developing in certain areas between the developing nations and the developed world. Within the Third World itself, the world energy crisis has made the relatively wealthy states better off and the poorer peoples even poorer.

You have heard complaints that the Third World is becoming monolithic, that it is "ganging up" on the West, that it is developing a blind automatic majority in international agencies. Africa is often singled out in these criticisms, as the numerous African countries are an essential component of any such majority. Well, this trend is quite understandable when we remember the history and background of the African countries. Perhaps we should not be surprised that they are using the most compelling argument they have, which is their voting strength in the United Nations and other bodies. Africa must be heard.

But international organizations, in their present set-up, are not parliamentary bodies; they are rather a forum for discussing various world issues and reaching decisions on a consensus basis. Confrontation between rigid blocs will lead nowhere. Canada does not wish to be automatically assigned to some theoretical bloc. We regard this approach as simplistic and even harmful. It is a precarious world we live in and to such common enemies as disease, poverty and ignorance we run the risk of adding bristling suspicion and distrust.

If we are to progress through this difficult period in world history, we shall require good will, common sense and much greater knowledge of each other. Ignorance is highly dangerous in this volatile international environment. It is certainly true that knowledge does not always bring wisdom, but we should strive to create a climate in which that essential quality can be nurtured.

There is some urgency, in my view, to expose and discuss more formally with African leaders the Canadian Government's views on these matters; even more urgent, perhaps, is that I, as Secretary of State for External Affairs, be briefed at the highest level on the approach of African governments to the second special session on development of the United Nations' General Assembly next fall. As you know, our Government found itself in a minority situation in the last Parliament; and the necessities of survival forced us to curtail drastically consultations with other governments. This situation has now been remedied, at least for a few years. Conse-

quently, I am now making arrangements for a two-week tour of Western Africa in mid-April; and I am looking forward to this opportunity to acquire a first-hand knowledge of the countries along the Gulf of Guinea and of the drought-affected area of the Sahel. In view of the objectives of Canadian policy in Africa, I hope, in the course of this visit, to reinforce the ties that already link Canada to the independent countries of Africa, to take stock of what has been accomplished so far, and to explain Canadian policies in areas we consider vital.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize that Canadians must not make the mistake of regarding the people of Africa simply as "underdeveloped" recipients of our economic aid. We must recognize that Africans have their own history, culture and religion; only by understanding and respecting their traditions can we benefit from their friendship. Conversely, Africans should recognize that Western countries also have their own past and their own social institutions, which are no less worthy of study for appearing somewhat puzzling to the ancient peoples of West Africa.

Much has been made, as you know, of tribalism in Africa and of the difficulties this social phenomenon presents for nation-building in the continent. But you, of all people, should have discovered that Canada is itself to some extent a nation of tribes. There are the English and French Canadian tribes, the Alberta tribe -- even my own Scottish Cape Breton tribe; but we prefer to call them language groups or provinces, or regions. And, of course, I don't have to tell you that interprovincial fights can sometimes be pretty rough! We have devised -- sometimes painfully -- in Canada a way to resolve these conflicts; we call it federalism, and I think that Africans could perhaps gain from a closer study of this quite remarkable political system. In due course, I am quite confident that we in Canada shall have something to learn from the way African states resolve various conflicts of interest between their own communities.

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