



Statements and Speeches

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MORE CANADIAN CASH FOR UNICEF

A Statement by Miss Monique Bégin, Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada, at the Pledging Conference of the UN Children's Fund, November 6, 1975.

The Canadian Government and people have been constant and enthusiastic supporters of UNICEF since its creation 30 years ago. They supported its initial role in providing emergency assistance to children in countries affected by natural or man-made disasters, and they have equally supported its present role of assisting governments, particularly those of developing countries, in establishing basic and essential services for children and their mothers within the communities in which they live.

The universal support UNICEF enjoys reflects the importance of its humanitarian and developmental role, and also its effectiveness in contributing to disaster relief operations. Its consistently non-political approach has safeguarded its ability to assist mothers and children in countries of all political persuasions. The respect and affection in which UNICEF is held by Canadians have been reflected in support over the years from the non-governmental sector in Canada, which has been very significant in financial terms.

Tens of thousands of Canadians each year use UNICEF greeting cards for Christmas and other special occasions, resulting to an important source of revenue for the Fund. The effectiveness of the greeting-card operation in Canada is not accidental; it is the result of hard work and good organization on the part of committed and devoted volunteers of UNICEF-Canada. Furthermore, the future of support for UNICEF in Canada appears bright as many Canadian children each year, during their Hallowe'en "trick-or-treat" rounds, seek contributions for less fortunate children in developing countries. Thus, the idea of sharing through UNICEF has become an aspect of Canadian life, and we believe has an important spin-off effect on the Canadian public's support for the Government's international development-assistance programs. In more specific terms, the public support of UNICEF programs last year amounted to \$2 million, a sum that puts total Canadian support for UNICEF among the major donors.

The Canadian Government considers that the key role of UNICEF within the UN system is to encourage and facilitate provision of basic services for young children and their mothers in developing countries and to serve as a catalyst for the establishment of comprehensive

programs to deal with the whole interaction between the child and his environment. This being said, it must be recognized that, as programs expand, it is essential that the areas of concern of all bodies in the UN system should be increasingly defined and their activities co-ordinated with one another and with those of donors in the context of overall programs established by governments. As regards UNICEF, my Government has prepared a working paper on priority-setting which suggests focusing on the "Conception-to-Year-Five" period as a specific priority area for UNICEF. It will look forward to pursuing the discussion of this conception in the Executive Board of UNICEF at its next session.

At this time last year, the Canadian Government pledged to the regular programs of UNICEF the sum of \$3.5 million. This year, in view of the continued pressures for expansion and the need to respond to the urgent needs of children and their mothers in developing countries, the Canadian Government will increase its contribution to \$5 million, subject to Parliamentary approval. In addition, I am pleased to draw attention to the fact that the Canadian Government has recently advised UNICEF that it is contributing \$2 million, \$1 million in cash and \$1 million in kind, in the present fiscal year in support of the special-assistance projects that have been designed to meet the urgent needs of children in countries most seriously affected by the current economic situation. This contribution is not earmarked for any specific country but is intended, rather, to help meet the most pressing needs.

As part of the Canadian Government's contribution to the United Nations Indochina Relief Operation, I am very pleased to announce that it will give an additional \$3-million cash contribution for the same program through UNICEF.

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