DAC AID REVIEW OF CANADA

The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD reviewed Canada’s development co-operation programme and policies on 24th June 1994. The Canadian Delegation was headed by Mr. John M. Robinson, Vice President, Policy Branch, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The examining countries were Denmark and France.

The Chairman of the DAC, Mr. James H. Michel, summarised the main issues discussed in the Review:

a) The DAC was seriously concerned about trends in Canadian ODA volume. According to preliminary figures, net ODA dropped by 10 per cent in real terms in 1993 to $2.1 billion while the ratio of ODA to GNP dropped 6 points to 0.40 per cent. In 1993 Canada’s ranking among DAC Members was eighth in volume and seventh in terms of effort expressed as a percentage of GNP, the same rankings as in 1992. The last budget announced a cut of 2 per cent in aid funding in 1994-95 with stable funding for the following two years. This will probably mean a further drop in real terms, which, prior to 1993, had occurred only once in the past decade, in 1989. The Committee’s concern was that these steep declines in aid volume could seriously weaken Canada’s highly-regarded aid programme, both in its substantial bilateral activities and in its traditionally strong multilateral contributions.

b) The Committee was hopeful that these budget prospects can be strengthened in the context of Canada’s major foreign policy review now under way. The Committee underlined its view that Canada has played a vital role as a global partner in international development co-operation and has made distinctive contributions to the stability, economic growth and human progress of large parts of the developing world, with notable development successes.

c) The Committee discussed various aspects of Canadian aid, such as sustainability, population, raising standards of respect for human rights and the rule of law, governance, women in development, and the partnership programme, which

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involves large numbers of Canadian non-government organisations (NGOs), institutions, and the private sector. The Committee hoped that Canada would continue to pursue these programmes vigorously and encouraged Canada to increase population assistance, giving concrete form to its strategy for this important area. The Committee also discussed the management renewal of CIDA and its plans to strengthen evaluation activities and reporting on the effectiveness of aid.

The DAC’s summary and conclusions will be published together with the report prepared by the OECD Secretariat on Canada’s aid programme.