

A message from the Atlantic Coast

In a recent letter, Dr. Ernesto Segueira, director of the regional Health Department, told us :

"Tengan Uds. la plena seguridad que esta ayuda desinteresada que su organización le está prestando a nuestro pueblo, servirá para hacer de Nicaragua un país más digno, más fuerte y más libre."

"You may be assured that the selfless help your organization gives to our people will contribute to make Nicaragua a stronger, freer and more dignified country."



**Coalition for Aid to Nicaragua
National Office
1672 East 10th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C. V5N 1X5
Tel.: (604) 879-7216**

There are Tools for Peace committees across Canada. The nearest contact in your area is :

TOOLS FOR PEACE



and
***Nicaragua's
Atlantic Coast***

The Atlantic Coast, a unique region

Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast is a unique region because of its history and geographical conditions as well as its ethnic and cultural characteristics.

Colonized by the English while the Pacific region was dominated by Spain, the Atlantic Coast is now inhabited by six different ethnic groups, the Mestizos, Miskitos, Creoles, Garifonas, Sumus and Ramas.

While this region, the poorest of the country, was totally neglected during the Somoza dictatorship, it has now become a priority area with the Sandinista government since coming to power in 1979. Health, education and various social services are for the first time available to the communities, and development projects are underway.

An autonomy project

Despite difficulties early on, the Sandinista government is making particular efforts to understand the Atlantic Coast population and its needs. A regional autonomy project was formulated after numerous consultations with all ethnic groups. This project will now become part of the new Nicaraguan Constitution.

Various native organizations around the world, including Canadian groups, gave their support to this project at a meeting in Managua in July 1986.

Tools for Peace and the Atlantic Coast

Strong links have been established between groups from Canada and the people of the South Atlantic Coast region. Last April, we were visited by Ray Hodgson, mayor of Bluefields - the major city of Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast.

This year, Tools for Peace wants to support the people of the Atlantic Coast, particularly at the level of health care, by buying engines for the motor boats used as ambulances and as transportation for medical personnel and materials.

Boats, an essential means of transportation

Given the geographical characteristics of the Coast (numerous rivers), and the scattered population, all transportation is by boat.

Boats are therefore particularly important in emergencies. For example, motor boats are often the only way to quickly transfer severely sick people from health care centers in small communities to the Bluefields' Hospital. The furthest community is located 350 km. from Bluefields.