

The goals were to provide major players in the democratic process with opportunities for development; to address issues concerning their professions; to create networks; and to encourage the establishment of special training programs in their countries to continue and increase the benefits gained from the development sessions.

### ***Network of Centres for Legal Aid and Advice for Women in Countries of the Francophonie***

This project was launched by Canada at the Chaillot Summit and is implemented by the Department of Justice Canada. It aims to help women obtain legal and social equality. The first three centres opened in Benin and Cameroon and were followed by centres in five other countries. The network was applauded at the non-governmental organization forum at the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in September 1995.

In most cases, the centres are able to help women attain legal and social equality by talking to citizen groups; through publications, public education tools, legal advice, representation in the courts, visits to penitentiaries; and by condemning violent acts.

The network was developed and has acquired equipment through funding by Canada, a contribution by Switzerland, and support from the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation (ACCT).

### ***Conference of Justice Ministers of the Francophonie***

The Conference of Justice Ministers of the Francophonie, held in Cairo from Oct. 30 to Nov. 1, 1995, was important for the future of legal and judicial co-operation in the francophone world. The ministers of justice agreed to a declaration and an action plan, the *Déclaration de Caire* and the *Plan d'action*. The two documents describe policies for legal and judicial co-operation in the coming years.

### **Education and Training**

#### ***International Seminar on Distance Learning, Conakry, Sept. 18-22, 1995***

Since the proposal to establish the International Francophone Consortium for Distance Learning (CIFIAD) was made at the Quebec City Summit in 1987, distance learning is now a reality and an integral part of the overall supply of education and training in francophone countries. It is believed that meeting the challenge of education and training in these countries would be impossible without distance learning and the support of CIFIAD. Traditional methods are not enough.