

Rwanda found that 74% of Canadians supported humanitarian assistance, 70% supported military participation in the UN peacekeeping force, and 69% supported technical and financial aid to help rebuild Rwanda. The general level of support for the Canadian aid program at that time measured 59%.

CIDA's humanitarian aid is not being used primarily as an instrument of foreign policy but rather as a means of expressing Canadian values. CIDA's approach has been victim-centred, not supply-driven. Canadian content has been provided by the domestic sourcing of emergency food aid and by the 12–16% of humanitarian project funding channelled through Canadian NGOs in recent years (\$12.7 million in 1994–95). The Agency has not invested resources in supporting domestic procurement or stockpiling of relief supplies because it has never judged it to be cost-effective. Some Canadian NGOs are involved in emergency food aid delivery as executing agents for CIDA and multilateral agencies.

The untied nature and multilateral focus of the Agency's humanitarian assistance has permitted flexible and very rapid response in comparison with some other donors, and indeed with some of CIDA's other programming mechanisms and channels. However, our altruism has been less successful in portraying a "Canadian face" or in linking to the potential domestic supply base. Canadian companies are now seeking economic opportunities in what seems to be the boundless market offered by the needs of millions of refugees. Other government departments are seeking roles for themselves, and CIDA funding, in this sphere of activities.

Emergency assistance is an enormous expenditure. Effectiveness is clearly of paramount concern. Results depend directly on delivering the right relief at the right time. Ultimately, the value of this huge investment (in what is sometimes called the preservation of social capital) depends on how successfully post-conflict societies move along the **continuum** from emergency to development. External support is often needed for social and physical **rehabilitation and reconstruction**. Is CIDA paying adequate attention to and providing a satisfactory response to these basic requirements?

4.3.3 The evolution of crises and their outcome

The term **continuum** entered the humanitarian lexicon a few years ago. Its purpose was to raise awareness of the post-emergency needs of a war-torn society, but the linear nature of the concept has limited its usefulness. First, post-conflict societies have tended not to emerge with steady predictability from their crises but rather to teeter back and forth on the brink of chaos. More problematic is the continuum's portrayal of the emergency as the starting point of the process. This deflects attention from the *root causes* of the conflict — be they historical, socio-political, developmental, demographic or other — and the need to address these as part of the solution.

It is difficult to dissect how decades of development aid failed to avert today's catastrophes. Improved understanding of the dynamics of peace, conflict and