

commitment of \$15.3 million for the Great Lakes Region Demobilization and Reintegration Programme. CIDA intends on maintaining strategic support during the transition period.

Given the extent of DRC's humanitarian disaster, this situation remains a priority of CIDA's Humanitarian Assistance Program. This humanitarian assistance addresses the areas of basic needs and protection of the civilian population. Canada is also participating actively in efforts to improve coordination of the humanitarian system in the DRC. Approximately \$10 million has been allocated for 2003/04 in response to the humanitarian disaster in the eastern DRC (including Ituri) and needs throughout the rest of the country. Moreover, Canada continues to urge the parties to the conflict to respect international humanitarian law and is stressing the importance of full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access and the protection of civilians, including humanitarian personnel.

With regard to achieving peace and security in the Great Lakes region, the Minister of Foreign Affairs has accepted the UN's invitation to chair the *Groupe des amis du Secrétaire général des Nations Unies pour les Grands Lacs* [group of friends of the Secretary General of the United Nations for the Great Lakes] and is actively participating in the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (*Conférence internationale sur la région des Grands Lacs/CIRGL*) process. This process will include programs on such varied themes as peace and security, governance and democracy, and economic development and regional integration. Canada will also provide funding for up to \$100,000 for a conference on peace and security in the Great Lakes, organized by the International Peace Academy.

### **Part III of the Report: Conclusion**

#### **Recommendation 6.1**

*The Sub-Committee urges the government to immediately increase its contributions to ongoing relief efforts in response to the urgent humanitarian crises in sub-Saharan Africa.*

The Government agrees with this recommendation. Last fiscal year, the Government stepped up its humanitarian assistance programming in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in response to the food shortages in southern Africa and the Horn of Africa. This year, and for the foreseeable future, sub-Saharan Africa will remain the Government's overall priority for humanitarian assistance, notwithstanding significant humanitarian responses that may take place elsewhere in the world. The Government has already increased its base humanitarian assistance budget allocation to sub-Saharan Africa this fiscal year, even as it has simultaneously responded to the Iraq crisis (funding for which is over and above the base humanitarian budget). The Government will continue to keep the humanitarian situation in Africa first and foremost in mind when reviewing the allocation of humanitarian budgets.