



Instead of setting up an individual project that we're proud of, what is important is to help the state and the country carry out these programs itself...State projects develop countries. We must help the state and work to develop a state's capacity alongside the private sector, and the media have a fundamental role. It is not just an issue of developing spectacular projects. To train journalists can be 100 times more important for development than to build a road that will not be maintained.

Célestin Monga

Country Economist, Africa Macroeconomics Group, World Bank
(Montreal, February 8, 2002)

Participants also noted that Canada should cancel all bilateral debts and advocate the cancellation of all multilateral debts being held by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and Regional Development Banks. Others added that Canada should accelerate the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) scheme to reduce debt with good performance.

Strengthening Governance

Policy advice on governance centred on institution building. In particular, it was proposed that Canada take an active role in supporting public sector reform; infrastructure renewal; transparency in government finance; media freedom and locally owned and directed development projects. Participants in all meetings pointed out that Canada should not attempt to impose a Western system of government on African states. Rather, it was recommended that Canada work with African states to develop political systems tailored to the African context. Nonetheless, participants recommended key elements of Western democracy should be established in African states. Moreover, recommendations promoting further support for the "organs of government" also drew on Western models including the creation of "checks and balances" in government. In order to

remedy a perceived overemphasis on the "formal trappings of democracy," some participants argued that Canadian policy should be geared more toward resolving the root causes of weak governance in many African states.

Encouraging Self-Sufficiency Through Education

It was argued that educational initiatives, both in Canada and Africa, were required to build capacities at the ground level. Some proposed that the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) make a more concerted effort to educate Canadians about foreign policy issues, particularly about Canada's involvement in African affairs. This would enable Canadians to make more informed contributions to policy development. In addition, African Studies should be encouraged and supported in Canada, especially at the university level. Awareness-raising among Canadians through increased support for cross-cultural understanding was also suggested in order to raise Africa's profile in Canada.

Divergent views were expressed on how Canadians could best contribute to capacity building and education for Africans. One