

## NGOs in action

### Spearheading the drive for

# HUMAN security

photo: CIDA



All the different measures required to build human security cannot become accepted international practice through government action alone. At every stage the driving force is needed of private groups and individuals operating within non-governmental organizations. NGOs played a key part in the process culminating in the adoption of the Ottawa Convention on Anti-Personnel Mines, and their efforts were recognized when the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, a coalition of over 1000 NGOs in more than 60 countries. In the negotiations that created the International Criminal Court in 1998, NGO participants included the Coalition for an ICC, Human Rights Watch and the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights.

In an address to the Hague Appeal for Peace in May, Foreign Affairs Minister Axworthy credited NGO action for recent progress in human security. He told NGO representatives at the conference, "Your energy, expertise and ideas are indispensable."

Following are prominent examples of NGO-government collaboration supported by Canada.

The **COALITION TO STOP THE USE OF CHILD SOLDIERS (CSC)** is working for the adoption of, and adherence to, national, regional and international standards (including an Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child) prohibiting the military recruitment and use in hostilities of anyone below 18 years of age. Canada was one of the first countries to contribute to the CSC when it was founded in June 1998.

**These civil society institutions are often among the few functioning providers of human security in weak states wrecked by, or emerging from, internal conflicts.**

—UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES **Sadako Ogata**

### The **INTERNATIONAL ACTION NETWORK ON SMALL ARMS**

(IANSA) was launched at the May 1999 Hague Appeal for Peace. IANSA facilitates NGO initiatives to prevent the proliferation and misuse of small arms.

At Norway's Fafo Institute for Applied Social Science, the **PEACE IMPLEMENTATION NETWORK (PIN)** seeks to reinforce international assistance in post-conflict situations. It does so through thematic forums that explore policies and practices in support of the implementation of peace agreements.

The **WAR-TORN SOCIETIES PROJECT (WSP)** is an international initiative that seeks to help societies recover from war and build a sustainable peace. Established by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and the Program for Strategic and International Security Studies, WSP has carried out research and action projects in countries emerging from war.

The **CANADIAN PEACEBUILDING CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE (CPCC)** is a network of Canadian NGOs, institutions, academics and other individuals working to shape policy for the non-governmental peacebuilding community. CPCC has assisted the Government of Canada in identifying gender, war-affected children and small arms as key human security issues that should inform and guide Canadian foreign policy.

Many NGOs working on human security issues receive funding and other support from the Canadian Peacebuilding Initiative, a joint undertaking of DFAIT and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Recipients include:

- Project Ploughshares, sponsored by the Canadian Council of Churches and operated by the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies;
- the Canadian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights; and
- CUSO's Mozambique Arms for Tools Project, which seeks to recover and destroy weapons caches that pose a threat to peace. ●—