

## **Peacekeeping and Conflict Prevention**

In 1999, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan called upon member states to nurture a “culture of prevention.” While possessing the tools required for conflict prevention, the UN and the Security Council need a vision and political will to use these tools. Effective conflict prevention means expanding the definition of security to include threats to human security — protection of civilians in situations of armed conflict, peace-support operations, war-affected children, strengthening peacekeeping, and an increasing number of other humanitarian considerations.

The international criminal tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia show that there is accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Setting up the International Criminal Court will be an even more powerful deterrent. An enhanced UN focus on conflict prevention would complement efforts being made in other international forums, such as the G-8, the group of eight leading industrial and democratic nations. In Japan in July 2000, G-8 leaders and foreign ministers introduced a comprehensive initiative that included curbing illicit diamond flows and illicit transfers of small arms; strengthening compliance with sanctions; focusing on war-affected children; enhancing the UN’s capacity in the area of civilian police; and improving the structure of development policies.

Canada believes the UN in general, and the Security Council in particular, must be more inclusive in its deliberations and flexible in its meeting formats. Canada has repeatedly called on the UN to enhance its capacity to react rapidly to crises, and Canada strongly welcomes the Secretary-General’s initiative to establish a high-level panel to review all aspects of UN peace operations. Stressing that the International Criminal Court will be a major step toward genuine international accountability, on July 7, 2000, Canada ratified the statute creating the court. Canada has called upon the Security Council to make greater use of targeted sanctions as a preventive measure and has identified corporate social responsibility as an issue requiring the attention of G-8 foreign ministers.

### **Protection of civilians**

Although numerous provisions in international law prohibit attacks against civilians in situations of armed conflict, attacks are often carried out without consequence to the perpetrators. In his report for discussion at the UN Millennium Summit, *We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century*, the Secretary-General stresses the need to strengthen adherence to international human rights and humanitarian law, to end the culture of impunity for attacks against civilians, and to devise protection strategies to meet changing needs. The Secretary-General also underscores the need to strengthen peace operations, to improve sanctions, and to stem the proliferation of small arms.