

the UN, and particularly the Security Council. Any efforts at UN reform must be accompanied by sufficient levels of political will, and physical and financial resources, if they are to be effective. Japan, like Canada, has always been committed to ensuring that the UN is provided with the necessary resources to carry out its functions – too many others have not. Too often national or regional interests, as well as bureaucratic inertia, get in the way of the UN fulfilling its Charter-mandated obligations. The recent crisis in Sierra Leone is a perfect example of both.²

Apart from being able to contribute what is needed in a crisis, the UN should have the capacity to deploy rapidly. Otherwise, the international community will have to depend on the willingness of individual states or regional alliances to carry out the work of maintaining international peace and security. Without the rapid deployment by Britain of some 800 paratroopers, events in Sierra Leone in all likelihood would not have been stabilized as quickly as they were and the violence would probably have been much worse. The same is true of the Australian-led INTERFET force that prevented further misery by intervening still at an early stage of the crisis in East Timor. NATO action in Kosovo accomplished much the same.

Canada has also made greater transparency in the Council's operations a priority. Canada believes that a more open, democratic and inclusive Council will become more effective. Whether as a result of permanent member prerogative or the secrecy of Council deliberations, too many pressing security issues are excluded from the agenda, and too many voices that should be heard are not. For example, Canada's efforts last April to have the Council discuss the Sudan conflict -- a human security crisis of staggering dimensions, was rejected. From Canada's perspective, the goal of a more accountable and representative Security Council would not be served by adding to its permanent membership. Greater democracy and accountability could be asserted instead by increasing the elected membership of the Council.

Minister Axworthy drew attention to the failure of the UN to manage arms control. In Geneva, arms control issues can not even get on the agenda. If the UN fails as an effective venue for these issues, it will be necessary to circumscribe the system once again, he said.

The need to work in partnership with civil society and the NGO community is more important now than ever before. NGOs can play a variety of important roles:

² When Canada and Norway offered staff to bolster UNAMSIL's planning capacity at the height of the recent crisis, they never received a reply to their offer. The reason behind this was that since these staff would be provided as *gratis* personnel, they had become politically unacceptable. A coalition of nations unable to provide such free support had collaborated in the General Assembly over a year ago to prevent any other nation from doing so. This doesn't serve the UN well, nor did it help the people of Sierra Leone. (The UN has also expressed reservations about accepting these sorts of offers because it fears that it lacks the capacity to absorb such contributions.)