

Thirty-four per cent of Rwandan households are headed by women. Women perform almost three quarters of agricultural work as well as being responsible for food, water, wood, etc. Despite being the principal cultivators, women have no right to the land they cultivate and have been marginalised in terms of access to technical services. They have limited access to credit and their representation at communal levels is practically nonexistent. The Government of Rwanda has committed itself to eliminating discrimination against women and proposes to include, as part of the revision of the labour code, measures to increase and support women's education, training, women's organizations and enterprises, and access to justice. Although the Government of Rwanda intends to reduce the uncertainty of land tenure for Rwandans, it has not made any firm commitment towards the allocation of arable land plots to women.

After the genocide, the **UN Human Rights Field Operation (HRFOR)** was created to monitor and investigate the human rights situation and to assist in rebuilding civil society. The Government of Rwanda progressively voiced its objection to HRFOR's exercise of its monitoring mandate and on July 28, 1998, the mission was terminated. The key impasse in the negotiations between the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Government of Rwanda was over the monitoring role of HRFOR and its mandate.

After its assumption of power in 1994, the new Government declared a **five-year transition phase**, during which all grassroots-level activities of political parties were suspended. Recent fighting in Rwanda is indicating that this transition phase will probably be prolonged.

CANADIAN POSITION

Canada is continuing its support for the Government of Rwanda's national reconciliation programs and supports efforts to put an end to the culture of impunity. To avoid repetition of the 1994 genocide, Canada is assisting with efforts to combat its effects. Consequently, Canada is concentrating its efforts, bilaterally and multilaterally, on the restoration of an independent Rwandan judicial system.

Since 1994, Canada has had the lead on the Rwanda resolution adopted by consensus at both CHR and the UN General Assembly 3rd Committee. However, at CHR 54, the African Group took over responsibility for drafting the resolution and secured the replacement of the Special Rapporteur by a Special Representative, whose mandate is primarily (though not exclusively) focussed on technical assistance.

Canada led the negotiations on a resolution on the Human Rights situation in Rwanda at the **UN General Assembly (UNGA53)**, which were complicated when Rwanda tabled its own resolution on the issue. Consensus was finally reached on a Chair's text which "expressed deep concern over the continued violation of human rights in the country" but which did not assign blame for withdrawal of HRFOR, and incorporated mention of the Government of Rwanda's five point human rights plan.