

country and return may be restricted through exit visa requirements. In addition, public funding for opposition political parties, which should be made available in accordance with the national election law, has not yet been forthcoming.

Women are equal in law, although they remain under-represented in the workforce and in political life. However, the government has taken a number of steps to promote the advancement and protection of women's rights, including the appointment of a Special Advisor to the Prime Minister on women's issues. Female genital mutilation is a widespread practice and is the target of programs by a number of national and international organizations. **Child labour** is still a problem, particularly in the informal sector. The government has not ratified ILO Convention 138 on the minimum age for admission to employment, but has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Labour Code stipulates that the minimum age for employment is 14 years of age.

The donor community continues to support the government's **reform of the judiciary and legal system**, to ensure respect for the rule of law and the application of due process. These reforms appear to be making some headway, with the Supreme Court asserting some autonomy, improved efficiency in court administration becoming more evident, and legal training for civil servants at the civil service college expanding. However, the government has been hampered in its efforts by a shortage of personnel and resources. The trial of former Derg officials for genocide and other crimes against humanity continue, albeit at a very slow pace, and stretch the government's resources to the limit. As well, the Government organized and hosted, with donor support, the long-promised conference on the **establishment of a Human Rights Commission and Ombudsman**. A program for concrete action has recently been drafted. However, victims of human rights violations have difficulty in obtaining an effective remedy due to a congested court system and an apparent reluctance by the judiciary to intervene in what are often seen as political cases. This problem is compounded by the fact that the police and other officials will, on occasion, ignore court orders with which they disagree.

CANADIAN POSITION

Canada has made representations to the Ethiopian government on the issue of the **deportation** of Ethiopians of Eritrean origin at the highest levels and maintains an ongoing dialogue with the government on the issue of human rights.

During the year, Canada chaired two **donors groups on human rights**. Canada is a major donor in the democratic development and good governance sector and the largest donor in the justice and judicial sector, and provided support inter alia to the conference on establishing a Human Rights Commission and Ombudsman, and for judicial and legal reform.