

- *expanding Canada's program of bilateral cooperation with Mexico, and investigating the feasibility of increasing Canadian support for Mexico's development efforts, targeting to areas of greatest need and including consultations with a broad range of non-governmental stakeholders;*
- *involving parliamentarians as much as possible in the deepening of the Canada-Mexico relationship and supporting more inter-parliamentary deliberations on major bilateral and North American policy issues and taking the findings into account. Consideration could also be given to the participation of Canadian ministers in inter-parliamentary forums where that is deemed appropriate by the parliamentary representatives to such forums.*

The Government fully agrees with this recommendation. Since 2000 in particular, bilateral cooperation between our two countries has flourished across a wide range of sectors. In April 2001, the Prime Minister and Mexican President outlined a new agenda for bilateral relations, which included working together to promote democracy and good government and to strengthen civil society in Mexico.

Governance cooperation provides a new focus to the bilateral relationship, which the Government considers as a key contribution towards equipping Mexico with the tools needed to manage its development process. As described in more detail in response to Recommendation 1, senior Canadian officials continue to share information with their Mexican counterparts on managing the machinery of government. For example, the January 2003 Canada-Mexico MOU on Cooperation on Federalism is a collaborative effort to assist Mexico in modernizing its highly centralized system to make it more flexible and responsive to the needs of its citizens. These ongoing exchanges have laid the foundation for even stronger ties and the Government is committed to expanding this cooperation in many areas. Also towards Mexico's development goals, CIDA has disbursed an average of \$7 million per annum in Mexico over the past three years, primarily through the Partnership Branch, financing grass-roots projects in the poorest states of Southern Mexico.

Further enhancing the Canada-Mexico agenda is the frequency of bilateral contacts. Canadian and Mexican senior officials virtually across government are in continual contact, and well over half of Cabinet met with their Mexican counterparts over the past year, several more than once. Prime Minister Chrétien and President Fox have also met several times bilaterally, most recently in Mexico City in February 2003, and twice in a trilateral context with President Bush. A number of provincial governments have also established strong linkages with counterparts in Mexico.

