

Taking up the Challenge

Responding to the challenge of peacebuilding is not easy — it requires a leap of faith. Canada made that leap in 1996 with the launch of the **Canadian Peacebuilding Initiative**.

The Initiative is a joint undertaking between the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), because peacebuilding lies at the intersection of international security and development. Two objectives of equal importance underpin the Initiative: to assist countries in conflict in their efforts towards peace and stability; and to promote Canadian peacebuilding capacity and Canadian participation in international peacebuilding initiatives. These objectives are interactive and interdependent.

The Canadian Peacebuilding Fund

With a budget of \$10 million for each fiscal year (1997-98 and 1998-99), the Fund is administered by CIDA. Its purpose is to augment and build upon the Agency's considerable experience in peacebuilding-related activities and the Department of Foreign Affairs' international political expertise. By providing a rapid response mechanism, the Canadian government is able to address urgent needs in conflict-affected countries and regions, while promoting Canadian peacebuilding expertise.

The Canadian Peacebuilding Fund was designed to serve as a catalyst to stimulate local initiatives toward peace. It responds quickly to

urgent peacebuilding situations in developing countries by supporting targeted, short-term interventions at a critical juncture in the peace consolidation process.

These interventions assist in creating an environment in which sustainable peace and longer-term development become possible. They draw upon local capacities, Canadian skills and international resources to implement projects and to accompany the peacebuilding process. The Fund supports activities aimed at conflict prevention, as well as post-conflict resolution and reconstruction. Whenever possible, emphasis is placed on responding to peacebuilding needs that have been locally identified and defined.

Since the Fund became operational in April 1997, some

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