

As civil society participation in the various peace processes increases, women are reportedly playing a more active role in the negotiations. However, very few women are visible in public positions. Women's rights are generally subordinated by the overwhelmingly patriarchal culture.

Discrimination along clan and sub-clan lines, and by ethnic Somalis against Bantu and Swahili populations remained common practice. As well, there were reports of the use of forced labour in farming areas in Lower Shabelle.

At the 53rd session of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), a consensus resolution, co-sponsored by Canada, renewed the mandate of the Independent Expert on Somalia. The resolution called on her to report to the CHR54 on the means necessary to establish a human rights technical cooperation program in Somalia.

The various peace processes for Somalia contributed to an overall decrease in human rights abuses and promoted a limited measure of stability in this fractured country. The prospects for the future are encouraging, but still precarious.

### CANADIAN POSITION

Canada has aligned itself with the Organization of African Unity's position of not recognizing any of the self-proclaimed governments in Somalia. Canada continues to follow local, regional and international efforts to bring the factions together, but does not, at this time, foresee playing a direct role in any of the peace efforts for Somalia.

Canada has informal contacts with representatives of various factions, in particular, through the Canadian High Commission in Nairobi and the Canadian Embassy in Addis Ababa. General expressions of concern about the human rights situation were conveyed through such channels. In Nairobi, Canadian human rights concerns, including female genital mutilation and the use of child soldiers, were raised on several occasions in informal contacts with faction leaders.

Canada provides humanitarian assistance as needed through various multilateral and non-governmental channels. Since 1991, Canada has provided over \$60 million in aid, mostly in emergency aid, including \$250,000 to the International Committee for the Red Cross. There is also a Canada Fund of \$150,000 for local projects in Somalia in areas such as agriculture and animal husbandry.