

- Data collectors often operate on a regional rather than local level, with the result that data is often imprecise, and data collection often becomes difficult precisely when that data is needed most, e.g. when conflict breaks out and collectors of data disappear.

The second type of data, micro-triggers, relates to ground-level, or household, perspectives, including the local political situation, climatic conditions, activities of IGOs and NGOs, the local security situation, food issues, market information, population movements, agricultural information, health information and, most importantly, coping mechanisms. The data constituting micro-triggers generally are monitored by local community organizations, NGOs having a national constituency and partnership base, such as CARE International and the International Red Cross Movement, and churches.

What is done with the information gathered? First, data has to be cross-checked and its validity verified. Second, full and proper analysis of data has to be provided, causes of any changes identified, and possible repercussions and consequences assessed in light of the coping mechanisms and response time available. Over the longer term, more reliable and robust sources of data will have to be identified.

There exists an early warning cycle involving monitoring, assessment, analysis, dissemination and, ultimately, the triggering of a response. Bridges have to be built between these various elements, and greater attention focussed on analysis.

Mr Sandré emphasised that the issue of response is the most important the international community faces. The sustainability of the response has to be analyzed, e.g. would it strengthen or overwhelm local capacities? Would it be conducive to long-term economic and social development?

In the final analysis, one must always be aware that there will always be events that are unexpected and unpredicted but far-reaching in their impact.

#### **International Crisis Response NGOs**

The Honourable Allan MacEachen, Senator, Member of the International Crisis Group, provided an overview of the activities of the London-based International Crisis Group (ICG), formally launched in July 1995 at the initiative of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. The Group, which focuses on political early warning, comprises distinguished individuals from around the world. It has a proposed annual budget of US\$4 million, based on contributions from governments and the private sector. Two Canadians sit on the Board: Ms. Barbara McDougall and Senator MacEachen.

The ICG's objective is to enhance the ability of countries and organisations to anticipate and to moderate crises. Their principal value-added will be with regard to assessment and