

G8 adopts Africa Action Plan

Africa topped the agenda of the G8 Summit in Kananaskis, Alberta, last June (see *Canada World View*, Issue 16). Joining Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and his fellow G8 leaders were the presidents of Algeria, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa, as well as United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan. In support of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Summit adopted an ambitious Africa Action Plan. This sets out an enhanced partnership between the G8 and African governments committed to implementing NEPAD, including its provisions regarding democracy, good governance and human rights.

Among the specific commitments under the Action Plan: to promote peace and security; to strengthen institutions and governance; to foster economic growth and sustainable development; to implement debt relief; to expand education and digital opportunities; to improve health and confront HIV/AIDS; to increase agricultural productivity; and to improve water resource management. Up to \$9.5 billion in new

funds for official development assistance will be made available to African countries annually by 2006, and the Summit agreed on a follow-up process to ensure that recipient countries implement NEPAD. African participants at the Summit welcomed the Action Plan, and Secretary-General Annan described it as a potential turning point in the history of Africa.

In addition, Prime Minister Chrétien announced a major package of Canadian initiatives supporting the Action Plan; these include allowing most imports from the least developed countries to enter Canada free of tariffs and quotas as of January 1, 2003.

Afghanistan ratifies the Ottawa Convention

On September 19, 2002, Afghanistan became the 126th state to complete ratification of the Ottawa Convention banning anti-personnel mines. For the first time this year, Afghanistan attended the annual Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, held in Geneva from September 16 to 20.

The Ottawa Convention is officially known as the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction. The most rapidly ratified multilateral disarmament treaty in history, it was opened for signature in Ottawa in December 1997 and entered into force on March 1, 1999.

Some 737 square kilometres of Afghan territory is affected by mines, posing a clear danger for returning refugees and the local population.

Canada supported the launch of the United Nations' Mine Action Program for Afghanistan (MAPA) in 1990, and it provided more than \$12 million for demining and victim assistance between 1990 and 2001. Canada has recently stepped up its funding for mine action as part of the \$100 million

A Global Ban on Landmines



L'interdiction complète des mines terrestres

CANADA-LEBANON TIES

(from p. 15)

Bilateral relations between Canada and Lebanon have been strong for many years, reinforced by each country's membership in the United Nations, La Francophonie, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and by the presence of embassies in each other's capitals since 1958. The two countries do business together (including Canadian investment in Lebanon), and have each signed a foreign investment protection agreement as well as a double-taxation agreement.

Aid is another important link. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has supported Lebanon's reconstruction following the 1975-90 civil war, with contributions to date exceeding \$45 million. Through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, CIDA has also provided assistance to Palestinian refugees in the region, 370,000 of whom are registered in Lebanon. Among the other development projects: reforming Lebanon's taxation system in cooperation with the Lebanese Ministry of Finance (the country recently instituted a Value Added Tax based on Canada's Goods and Services Tax); a business administration training program

in cooperation with Lebanon's Hariri Foundation; and training for Lebanese post office personnel through CIDA's Industrial Cooperation Program. The Quebec government has contributed toward a museum on the archaeological site at the 7,000-year-old town of Byblos. The Government of Canada provided over \$4 million in logistical support for the Beirut Summit of La Francophonie.

In recognition of the ties between Canada and Lebanon, the Lebanese government contributed funds to replace many of the trees that had been destroyed in Ottawa's Rockcliffe Park during the historic 1998 ice storm.