

CANADIAN POSITION

Two Canadian electoral experts, Joanne Waugh and Dwight Fulford, joined our diplomats in observing the June presidential election. As the only Western country to send such experts, Canada was well placed to endorse the general conclusion that the election was free and fair. During the summer, Canada strongly condemned the annulment of the election, and called for immediate diplomatic access to detained human rights leaders and journalists. Canada also suspended Nigeria's eligibility for military and police training assistance, and cancelled an incoming visit by the Nigerian Institute of Strategic Studies. In September, the former Secretary of State for External Affairs received Chief Abiola in Ottawa, spoke out for the restoration of democracy and Abiola's safe return, gave him a copy of the election observers' report and arranged for him to meet Parliamentarians of all major parties.

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet was quick to condemn General Abacha's military takeover and dissolution of all democratic institutions in November. He indicated that Canada's new government would maintain the previous measures and watch further developments in Nigeria closely.

Previously Canada's substantial relations with Nigeria had covered the full range of international activity, backed by personal and institutional contacts, a shared federal structure and active participation in the Commonwealth and the UN. Nigeria looked to Canada as a model in fields as diverse as environment and disarmament, and many government officials visited to study Canada's democratic institutions. Given this background, Canadian expertise might be relevant to the Nigerians in the context of the coming constitutional conference.

Canada's modest aid program is centred on NGOs and universities, as well as urban and rural water-supply projects of which the latest is for Ondo State. Canadian aid totalled \$4.3 million in 1991-92, including multilateral channels. As all of it goes directly to the Nigerian population without passing through the federal government, Canada unlike some other donors has not cut aid in response to the recent setbacks.

8

9

10

11

12