In Ethiopia, in 2014–2015, DFATD contributed over $2 million to a $35-million multi-donor initiative that supported more than 500 Ethiopian civil society organizations, helping them to deliver improved services to community members and to work constructively with local governments to better respond to community needs. The project has supported CSO activities to combat marginalization of women and girls in ethnic minority groups, and CSO-government dialogue on, for example, the impact of restrictive CSO legislation.

In Pakistan, Canada supported an $8 million project with the International Labour Organization that included the delivery of training to 799 journalists. The project resulted in over 300 news reports on women and labour issues, which in turn helped lead to the establishment of a national, online complaints mechanism for workplace harassment.

In 2014–2015, Canada also supported the independence of both traditional and new media and helped to equip people with the information they need to participate in well-informed, democratic decision making.

In January 2015, DFATD and IDRC partnered with the World Bank to create the Open Data for Development program. Part of the Government of Canada's 2014-2016 Action Plan on Open Government, the program aims to scale up proven approaches and improve coordination among open-data initiatives so that they benefit developing-country citizens.

Electoral Processes and Institutions

In 2014–2015, Canada supported the ability of citizens to participate in the electoral cycle and build local capacity to monitor electoral processes. For instance, in the lead up to the 2015 presidential elections in Sri Lanka, Canada supported the training of long-term domestic election observers.

As well, in 2014–2015, Canada supported the deployment of 645 international and Canadian election observers and more than 2,000 domestic election observers to observe elections in Afghanistan, Colombia, Egypt, Fiji, Moldova, Tunisia and Ukraine.

Through Canada's support, Kenya's independent electoral commission not only improved its data management and sharing with other government bodies so that more citizens could be registered to vote, it

Country: Colombia © DFATD/Jean-Francois Leblanc

strengthened monitoring and reporting of election results. The project also evaluated what worked to encourage youth, women and persons with disabilities to vote in the 2013 elections.

Canada supported a project with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) that is helping Indonesia to enhance its legal and regulatory framework and build Indonesia's capacity to run more effective, credible and inclusive elections. Two post-election surveys and evaluations conducted by IFES following Indonesia's 2014 Legislative (April) and Presidential (July) elections will help the Indonesian Electoral Commission to better prepare for future balloting, including regional elections slated for December 2015. The project is also equipping civil society organizations with tools to better research and advocate for improvements in human rights, the fight against corruption, transparency and accountability in elections.

Legislatures and Political Party Systems

The development of legislatures as effective bridges between citizens and their governments are fundamental to democratic progress as they give a voice to constituents through elected representatives. To that end, Canada funded projects that strengthen legislatures and encouraged exchanges of knowledge and expertise between Canadian parliamentarians and legislators in other countries.

For example, in 2014–2015, Canada supported 24 female parliamentarians and their staff in Burma by providing training related to

Country: Pakistan © DFATD / Lana Slezic

CANADA'S OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Canada promotes human rights, pluralism and tolerance throughout the world. The Government of Canada's Office of Religious Freedom promotes and defends religious freedom abroad through financing projects outside Canada to assist members of religious communities who are facing violations of their basic right to freedom of religion. In 2014–2015, the Office supported 10 projects qualifying as official development assistance in seven countries for a total value of $2.1 million.