

level. Governments and civil society are still developing trust and new rules of conduct. NGO's continue to be subject to close government control through a rigorous registration procedure which does not include adequate provisions for the establishment of advocacy groups and human rights organizations, especially on a national scale. A court decision countering Government interference in the internal governance of a trade union confederation remains to be implemented. The appeal process relating to the closure of the offices of the Oromo Relief Association in 1995 by Ethiopian authorities has been very slow.

On the positive side, federal authorities intervened to obtain the release of members of NGO's working on civic education programs who had been arrested by regional/local authorities. Some publishers and editors of independent and contentious newspapers remain in detention. Yet, Government printing presses continue to print opposition newspapers. The Government also provides journalism courses which are open to participants from opposition newspapers.

The transition to democracy in Ethiopia will continue to be a long term process that cannot yet be taken for granted. The Government is still adjusting to the need for greater tolerance for pluralism and criticism. Civil society is equally learning to play a more responsible role.

Canadian Position

Canada follows closely developments touching human rights, democratic development and good governance in Ethiopia. Canadian policy is to work with the Government of Ethiopia to establish the systems and institutions required to promote the evolution of democracy, the rule of law, civil society and a market economy in Ethiopia. In this context, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) launched several major initiatives:

- i) Canadian judicial experts have assisted the Federal Supreme Court with training and strategic planning to better manage the court system;
- ii) Canadian experts helped draft the new financial administration act which was passed by the Ethiopian Parliament and are assisting in developing federal/regional financial management capacity and in drafting the Regulations, Procedures and Manuals for the financial management framework;
- iii) Canada is also studying means to support the work of the Ethiopian Parliament to create a human rights commission and an ombudsman's office.

As necessary, Canada makes representations to the Federal and regional governments on human rights issues. The Embassy continues to support a number of grassroots initiatives to promote democratisation, good governance and respect for human rights.