The Canadian proposal envisions that la Francophonie will provide political and organizational support to these regional roundtables. Canada will provide funding for the initial meetings, and then will encourage other donors to assist with the financing of further roundtables. It is also expected that an African NGO will be hired to act as the facilitator and organiser of these roundtables, and that after some time the process will develop its own *self-sustaining momentum*. Some of the potential topics for such roundtables would be the protection of minority rights, military expenditures, refugee migration, demilitarisation, and democratic development. Other participants suggested light arms proliferation and the policies of international financial institutions (IFIs), such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which contribute to the spread of conflict, as potential issues for regional security roundtables. It was also noted that the intention is to promote regional confidence-building and cooperation by suggesting roundtable issues which have some chance of producing a *consensus*.

Related to this concern is the importance of ensuring that such Francophonie initiatives are not seen by OAU members as a form of *rivalry*, in the way the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was perceived. However, it is hoped that given the overlapping membership of the two organisations, many of the member states will perceive an interest in seeing both succeed in this new role. It was also noted that la Francophonie, while seeking to give Francophone Africa a greater sense of participation in these issues, continues to accept the leadership role of the OAU.

SESSION III: INTERNAL CAUSES OF CONFLICT AND POSSIBLE RESPONSES

A) Democratic Development and Conflict

The process of democratisation has been often proven to be difficult and erratic in its practice in African countries emerging from decades of authoritarian rule. The absence of generally agreed-upon structural frameworks and concrete steps for democratic development means that there is no clear model to help guide the process along. The decline in the political process that can result from this problem impedes the long-term resolution of conflict-producing issues and can plunge a fragile transitional state into violent internal strife.

This reality brings an important consideration to bear on the question of effective conflict prevention in Africa: that conflict prevention is not solely a matter