

# LA FRANCOPHONIE AT THE BILATERAL LEVEL

## Canadian Assistance to Africa and the Middle East

### *Northern Africa and the Middle East*

The countries in this region that belong to La Francophonie are Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia.

In Egypt, CIDA's programs are concerned with promoting the sustainable development of natural resources and supporting economic and social reforms.

An example is a project to protect and develop the Nile which will help Egypt to compensate for the economic losses caused by water pollution and degradation of the bed and banks of the Nile. The project, carried out by SNC-Lavalin, enables the Egyptian Department of Public Works and Hydraulic Resources to conduct strategic research. It will also establish a central laboratory and an inspection and safety management program and support the Institute for Research on the Nile.

The Women's Initiatives Fund is intended to improve the social and economic situation of women entrepreneurs in Upper Egypt by facilitating their access to bank credit and assistance with regard to management and technological adaptation. After three years, 200 women have succeeded in creating 150 enterprises employing 350 workers. The project is implemented by the Foundation for International Training, a Canadian non-governmental organization.

In Lebanon, the activities of CIDA, including a project to reform public administration and one to reform the fiscal system, are supporting the Lebanese government in reconstructing the country. Bilateral assistance to Lebanon amounts to nearly \$1.5 million a year.

In the Maghreb, the co-operation program centres on technology transfer and skills development. The program is thus increasingly oriented to support for the productive sector and the strengthening of institutions with a training mission. It also seeks to contribute to the strengthening of mutually beneficial partnerships.

### *Western Africa*

CIDA operates development assistance programs in eight of the eleven countries of Western Africa that are members of La Francophonie: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal.

CIDA aims to reduce poverty in these countries by supporting social and economic changes likely to create a more harmonious balance between population, the economy and the environment. The priority sectors for its programs are development of the private sector and of urban and regional infrastructures, particularly in the energy and transportation sectors; the satisfaction of certain basic needs (such as education, drinking water and health); social communications; and the management of natural resources. In the latter sector, CIDA takes a special interest in halieutic resources and implementation of the convention on desertification.

The projects also promote women's participation in the development process, reduction of the rate of population growth, regional co-operation and environmental protection.

The Canadian Centre for International Health and Development Co-operation of Laval University was assigned responsibility by CIDA for a \$25.5 million project (1995-2001) in seven countries of La Francophonie in Western Africa. Its objective is to reduce the incidence of AIDS in this region and promote the development of support services in communities.