

# News BRIEFS

## CANADA'S MONTH AT THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

In April, Canada held the presidency of the United Nations Security Council for the second time in its current two-year term as a member. Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy chaired several meetings at which he advanced Canada's human security agenda. Here are some of the highlights.



UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Foreign Affairs Minister Axworthy at the UN Security Council

### AFGHANISTAN

On April 7, Afghanistan was the topic of discussion at a Council meeting proposed by Canada and chaired by Mr. Axworthy. The purpose was to address the humanitarian and human rights crisis in that country—particularly the plight of women and girls, who are denied access to education and basic health care.

At Canada's suggestion, the Council issued a statement urging all Afghan parties to ensure full and unhindered access to international humanitarian assistance for anyone in need. The statement also called for resumption of negotiations toward a political settlement, with the goal of establishing a broad-based, multi-ethnic and fully representative government.

On the same day, with International Co-operation Minister Maria Minna, Mr. Axworthy announced a \$300 000 contribution to the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Assistance to Afghanistan. Chief beneficiaries of the assistance will be women and girls.

### SANCTIONS POLICY

On April 17, Mr. Axworthy announced the creation of a Security Council working group on sanctions policy, with a mandate to develop recommendations on how to make

UN sanctions more effective. The working group will explore ways of targeting sanctions and avoiding negative humanitarian impacts. It will report its findings to the Council in November.

On the same day, *The Sanctions Decade*—a Canadian-sponsored study on sanctions, by the International Peace Academy—was released by Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Minister Axworthy. The study recommends concrete measures to make sanctions "smarter," more humane and more capable of achieving their potential as a tool for multilateral diplomacy.

Mr. Axworthy also announced funding for two more studies on specific aspects of sanctions. In addition, he said that a conference of experts would be convened to begin development of a legal regime to govern the use of sanctions, including standardized policy guidelines and operational principles.

### ANGOLA SANCTIONS

On April 18, Minister Axworthy announced the adoption of a Council resolution on Angola sanctions. This acted on key recommendations of the UN Expert Panel's March 2000 report on alleged violations of Council measures imposed against the Angolan rebel group, UNITA. The resolution will strengthen efforts

to stop the illicit trade in diamonds, petroleum and arms, while reinforcing financial and other restrictions on rebel leaders.

Further, the Minister announced \$300 000 in funding for specific projects supporting the implementation of the Security Council resolution. These include: support for sanctions monitoring; the holding of a conference of experts to devise a system for increasing transparency in the control of diamonds, from their place of origin to the markets; and convening a workshop in Canada to explore ways of restricting the manufacture and trade of small arms, with a focus on Angola. The conflict in that country has been going on for more than a decade.

### PROTECTING CIVILIANS IN ARMED CONFLICT

On April 19, a Council meeting chaired by Mr. Axworthy adopted a resolution on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. The resolution re-affirmed the UN's strong condemnation of the deliberate targeting of civilians in situations of armed conflict. It contained specific provisions for enhancing the physical protection of civilians caught in the crossfire of conflict, including: unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance; preventive action on behalf of civilians at risk; explicit attention to the protection of civilians in peace-keeping mandates, especially women, children and vulnerable groups; and greater responsiveness to threats of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Canada originally placed the issue of protection of civilians in armed conflict before the Council during its previous presidency in February 1999. The outcome was a report by the Secretary-General, tabled the following September; this recommended concrete ways of protecting civilians, who now account for more than 80 percent of casualties in modern conflict. ●

For more information on these issues and other subjects discussed during Canada's Council presidency, visit the Department's Web site at [www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca) and click on "News Releases."