

credentials of **Cameroon** in the run-up to its admission, reaffirmed, in a practical sense, the commitment of member states to democracy as a key criterion of membership.

In February, 14 countries (Sweden, Norway, Australia, South Africa, Barbados, Costa Rica, Chile, Denmark, Spain, Finland, **India**, the Netherlands, Portugal and Belgium) met in **Stockholm** to launch the **International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance**. The Institute aims to provide international expertise to the management of elections internationally and to the establishment of effective democratic and electoral institutions.

The **OAS**, in particular the **Unit for the Promotion of Democracy**, continued to support efforts to strengthen democracy in the Americas. In Haiti, it played a leading role, in cooperation with the UN mission, in the organization of presidential and legislative elections. **Canadians played a central role as Head of the OAS electoral mission for both elections**. The OAS also mounted effective long term monitoring missions in **Guatemala and Peru**. In September, **Canada and Brazil became coordinating partners in implementing themes dealing with Strengthening Democracy and Promoting and Protecting Human Rights as laid out at the Miami Summit of the Americas in 1994**.

The **ACCT** continued its program of support for democratic development in **Francophone countries throughout 1995**. In cooperation with the **Assemblée internationale des Parlementaires de langue française** and the **Conseil permanent de la Francophonie**, the **ACCT organized observation missions in Benin and Niger in March, Guinea in June, Gabon and Côte d'Ivoire in the fall**. The ACCT also continued its program of judicial cooperation to reinforce the rule of law and respect for human rights in member countries and maintained its support to documentation centres in member parliaments.

OUTLOOK FOR 1996

In all regions in 1996, elections will continue to garner their fair share of the international spotlight, but increased focus will be placed on **democratic consolidation to take the development of these new democracies to the next level**. Attention will increasingly be directed at efforts to build and further develop key democratic institutions to deepen the roots of democratic entrenchment. **Developing effective representative government and improving the transparency and accountability of public institutions and leaders will be touchstones in assessing the longevity of the democratic gains made over the past six years**.
