Recommendation 6.5

Many of the current crises in sub-Saharan Africa are the result of regional rather than national developments. The government should therefore consider adopting a greater regional focus in its development programming in Africa, and integrate a regional focus with development cooperation with its countries of concentration.

The Government supports this recommendation and recognizes that many development challenges in Africa affect not only individual nations but neighbouring countries as well. For example, health threats and environmental problems can be tackled only when affected countries work toward collective solutions. Equally, peace and security problems in one country may have causes and/or effects in neighbouring countries, requiring regional approaches and responses, such as in recent events in West Africa (Sierra Leone and Liberia).

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) already takes a regional focus in many of its development programmes in Africa. For example, the Canada Fund for Africa supports initiatives and mostly large-scale programmes, at both the regional and pan-Africa levels, which will have an impact on sustainable development in Africa. With regard to peace and security, the Canada Fund for Africa and CIDA's Pan Africa Programme are supporting the efforts of the African Union to help resolve conflicts across the continent. Additional support is also provided by CIDA to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), at a regional level, to help resolve conflicts. In Central Africa, Canada is also developing a regional approach to the Great Lakes region, working towards the holding of an International Conference for the Great Lakes Region.

Through its Pan Africa program, CIDA supports African nations in working together to develop solutions to multi-regional challenges. In fact, Canada is the first international donor to establish a program to support pan-African institutions that want to develop their organizational capabilities to better manage large trans-boundary issues and shared challenges. Along with other donors, and African members, the Program supports such organisations as the African Virtual University, the Regional AIDS Training Network, the Nile Basin Initiative and the African Capacity Building Foundation. All contribute to addressing continental development issues and to building multi-regional cooperation.

The Government is currently working to achieve a better coordination among Departments on questions relating to peace and security. It is expected that these efforts could result in addressing conflict prevention in countries of focus while providing for regional scope to respond to peace and security issues.