

Introduction

Ms. Lucie Edwards, Director General, Global and Human Issues Bureau, introduced the workshop, remarking that it was the first roundtable of the Humanitarian Policy Forum, recently launched by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. The forum aims to bring together federal officials, representatives from the United Nations, the NGO community, research institutions and academics, and draw upon these various constituencies in order to form realistic policy options with regard to future complex emergencies.

Ms. Edwards pointed out that the forum coincided with a workshop on the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, hosted two days earlier by the Canadian International Development Agency. The experience in Rwanda demonstrated the importance of preventive diplomacy, of which early warning can form a part. Ms. Edwards added that today's discussions will not focus exclusively on Rwanda or on what may come to pass in Burundi. But inevitably both will provide a backdrop for the discussions.

In precisely the same way, Rwanda and Burundi provide the backdrop for much that the members of DFAIT's Global and Human Issues Bureau are seeking to accomplish. The Bureau's mandate includes rethinking of traditional approaches to peace and security, including peacebuilding and preventive diplomacy, and our approach to humanitarian affairs. The Humanitarian Policy Forum forms part of that process.