

STRENGTHENING CANADA'S OVERSEAS NETWORKS

Government intends to engage actively with the new Iraqi government, through naming an ambassador (initially non-resident) and opening an embassy as soon as possible.

At the G8 Sea Island Summit in June 2004, Canada agreed to work closely with its partners on a range of initiatives in the Middle East and North Africa, especially counterterrorism, transportation networks security, and non-proliferation (through the IAEA). The G8 leaders, who met with the Arab League and other regional leaders at the G8 Summit in 2004, also agreed to undertake the Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) initiative, which proposes a partnership to improve conditions for people in the region and, in so doing, looks to create an environment in which peace and stability can take hold.

According to the UN Development Programme's Arab Human Development Reports, the development problems in the region are not based primarily on a lack of resources, but on a shortage of three essentials: freedom, knowledge and gender equality. In response to these reports and the conclusions of other studies by groups from the region, the G8's BMENA initiative seeks to build a partnership with governments and civil society in the region to address democracy and governance, literacy, gender equality and human rights. Canada will be a full partner in delivering on the initiative, including through participation in the Forum for the Future process, a foreign minister-level venue to implement reform in partnership with representatives from the region.

Canada is also active in improving the lives of people in the region in other ways, including through our chairmanship of the UN Refugee Working Group, which deals with Palestinian refugee issues, and participation in the Amman-based Human Security Centre, jointly established by Canada and Jordan.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Canada's primary interest is to help reverse the region's social, economic and political marginalization, and to drastically improve all indices of African development, peace and security, and governance. Instability in the

region causes massive harm to its people: Africa has more internally displaced people than the rest of the world combined. Wars in Africa, including in the Democratic Republic of Congo, are estimated to have been responsible for three to five million deaths over the last few years. According to the World Bank, in 2004 there were 17 conflicts occurring in Africa. This also makes the region a potentially attractive base for transnational criminal activity and terrorism. Progress has been made (an end to war in Angola and Sierra Leone, for example), but the current situation in Sudan provides an illustration of the fragility of that progress. Despite the signing of several power-sharing agreements to end the country's lengthy north-south civil war, Sudan's western Darfur region continues to be wracked by violence and the suffering of innocent civilians.

Contributing to a successful resolution of Africa's problems is a key feature of Canada's international policy. We have been a strong advocate of African issues in the multilateral forums to which we belong, including the Commonwealth, la Francophonie and the UN. Beginning with the 2002 Kananaskis Summit, African issues have featured prominently on the G8 agenda. Foreign Affairs contributes to the G8 Africa Action Plan in support of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, launched at Kananaskis, including through a senior officer who acts as the Prime Minister's G8 Personal Representative on these issues. Through these and other means, including working

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA AT A GLANCE

45 countries in the region

Population – 733 million (11% of world total)

GDP – \$600 billion (roughly half that of Canada, or 1% of global GDP)

Immigration – just under 4% of immigrants to Canada come from this region; (major countries of origin – Somalia, South Africa)

Health – as many as 27 million are living with HIV/AIDS (about 4% of total population in the region); 7 out of every 10 people infected worldwide with HIV/AIDS live in Africa