

Government Response to the Report of the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

in Lebanon complete undergraduate university training. This will allow them to develop professional and management skills, particularly in the areas of business, science, biology, and engineering. In addition to enhancing their ability as income earners, the project will increase their contribution to the cultural, psychological, and economic development of their communities.

The Government makes significant annual contributions to the ongoing operations of UNRWA in the region. This is in addition to the contributions since October 2000 to UNRWA emergency programs for the West Bank and Gaza. UNRWA provides primary school education and vocational training for the registered refugee population in the region. It offers primary health care to refugees, and contracts or operates secondary health care facilities. It provides services such as drinking water, sewage, and garbage disposal in the refugee camps, and is involved in employment creation through microfinance and microenterprise programs. UNRWA's role is critical in maintaining access to basic health and social services for the most disadvantaged among the refugee population.

The Government's Expert and Advisory Services Fund supports Canadian involvement in the multilateral negotiations of the Middle East Peace Process. The final status of Palestinian refugees is perhaps one of the most complex issues faced by the Middle East Peace Process. Canada, as chair of the Refugee Working Group, plays an important leadership role through policy-oriented research and the provision of expert advisory services. It also facilitates international dialogue around this issue. The project is now focussing on the issues of planning for demographic change and the movement of people, compensation to Palestinian refugees, as well as gauging and engaging the public in debate on the refugee issue.

RECOMMENDATION 17

Canada should continue to impress upon Israeli and Palestinian authorities their responsibilities to respect international human rights obligations and their mutual interest in ending all violence, particularly terrorist violence targeting innocent civilians, and pursuing peace negotiations in good faith.

The Government has strongly advocated moderation and diplomatic support for those who take risks for peace. The Government has emphasized the importance of practical contributions such as participation in peacekeeping forces, support for human rights and the establishment of development assistance programs in the region.

Concrete examples of Canadian policy in action:

- The Government continues to emphasize, at the highest levels within the Palestinian Authority (PA), the importance that we and other members of the international community attach to adherence to international human rights norms;
- Canada closely follows the human rights situation in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza and is in regular contact with Israeli and Palestinian human rights NGOs. We raise human rights issues with the Government of Israel in both bilateral and multilateral fora;