

STRENGTHENING CANADA'S OVERSEAS NETWORKS

will continue its policy of engagement with Cuba across the full range of bilateral issues, including on human rights. Brazil stands out as an emerging regional giant, with whom trade and investment are growing priorities. Canada and Brazil will work more closely on shared regional and global interests.

Where human rights abuses continue, Canada will speak out, and work with democratically elected governments to strengthen all aspects of democratic governance and human rights. A key event in building regional consensus on democracy was the 2001 Quebec City Summit of the Americas, which led to the creation of the Inter-American Democratic Charter. Canada supports the theme for the 2005 Summit of the Americas, "Creating Jobs to Combat Poverty and Strengthen Democratic Governance."

At the Quebec Summit, leaders also committed themselves to advancing negotiations within the OAS on the proposed American Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In 2002, Canada established the Indigenous Peoples Partnership Program, which aims to promote the establishment or reinforcement of partnerships between Aboriginal entities in Canada and indigenous entities in Latin America and the Caribbean. Foreign Affairs will pursue the Partnership Program, in cooperation with Aboriginal leaders in Canada.

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Canada's interest in this region is driven by our sense of responsibility to help establish democracy, peace and security. Specifically, this includes addressing terrorism, helping to resolve regional conflicts, contributing to post-conflict peacebuilding, and working to halt the proliferation of WMD. The region challenges Canada to work with local populations to promote democracy and good governance, and alleviate poverty, while respecting human rights and cultural diversity.

Despite the Israeli-Palestinian dispute and violence in Iraq, as well as concerns over WMD and missile development in the region, there are some hopeful signs. In particular, the widespread commitment of the international community to support progress toward peace between the Israelis and Palestinians offers hope

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA AT A GLANCE

20 countries and territories, from Mauritania to Iran

Population – 336 million

Regional GDP – \$1.2 trillion (roughly equivalent to Canada's GDP)

Immigration – 20% of immigrants to Canada are from the region, with Iran the largest single-country source

Canada's official development assistance – about \$50 million per year. This region hosts our second-largest development cooperation program in the world, \$300 million for the reconstruction in Iraq

that this long-standing problem may be resolved. As a friend of both the Israelis and Palestinians, the Government will offer support to the Palestinian Authority leadership and population to enable the Authority to restore security, and economic and social development, coincident with Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the West Bank. In doing so, our hope is that sustained progress will permit a return to the Roadmap for Peace in the Middle East, and eventually a resumption of negotiations on a comprehensive settlement to the Arab-Israeli dispute. Popular support for democracy in Lebanon is another encouraging development.

A broad commitment to stabilization and reconstruction in Iraq is necessary to ensure sustained progress in renewing the institutions of the Iraqi state, in restoring security, and in establishing democracy. The Government will continue its program of support for Iraqi reconstruction and development, to which it has committed \$300 million. Our aim is to promote the emergence of an independent, stable and democratic Iraq, at peace with its neighbours and participating fully in regional and international affairs, including the global economy. Canada has recently assumed chairmanship of the Donors Committee of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq, and will use its position to encourage the improved coordination of assistance, and better targeting of Iraqi priorities. We stand ready to assist Iraqis as they move to draft a new constitution, should they seek assistance. The