

financial and staff resources are limited, the Board has decided, for the moment, to limit our project activity to 13 core countries and four theme priorities. The core countries are Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, Haiti, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Togo, Nigeria, Burma, Indonesia, Pakistan and Thailand. Our four themes are women's rights, indigenous rights, globalization, and democratic development and justice.

I might say that the criteria for choosing the core countries and the four themes are under review - and the countries and the themes might change in the coming year.

As I mentioned, we always work with partners in these countries - where we fund projects and provide technical assistance - all designed to strengthen the capacity of the local organizations so that they can defend and promote their own rights. We also work with them in advocating their rights before their local governments, at the UN Commission on Human Rights and the UN human rights committees, and finally before regional human rights bodies such as the Inter-American Committee for Human Rights.

I might say that while our major activity is in the 13 core countries and respects the four priority themes, we do comment and have minor activities on other human rights issues and other country situations; for recent examples: Algeria, Colombia and Afghanistan.

To give you an idea of our program during the past year we carried on major activity with respect to: the International Criminal Court; Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC); Free Trade Area for the Americas (FTAA), codes of conduct; the Rwanda Tribunal; Human Rights in Congo/Zaire; Indigenous Women of the Americas; support for pro-democracy in Burma; and democratic development in Peru and Pakistan.

At this point I would like to mention the democratic development part of our mandate. We have a democratic development exercise that has been carried out in seven countries: Kenya, Tanzania, Guatemala, El Salvador, Peru, Thailand and Pakistan. There are three phases: report, forum, and implementation.

For the International Centre, however, no state can claim to be a democracy without guaranteeing fundamental human rights. Respect for human rights is a determining factor for any country which calls itself a democracy. Free and fair multi-party elections are not enough.

In the human rights field, the campaign to establish a permanent International Criminal Court is a good example of how Canada, working with other countries and NGOs, can make a significant difference. From the beginning Canada took a leadership role in supporting the proposal for a strong and effective court - and consequently found itself chairing the so-called "like-minded group" at the UN and at the six preparatory meetings. This was done despite the opposition of several major countries, including the U.S., France, China, Russia and until this year, the U.K.

This exciting proposal to combat impunity for war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity was in danger of being deflated, or being so watered-down that it would be virtually ineffective. You will recall that the idea for a permanent International Criminal Court was first put forward in the