

Peace and security

Peace, security and respect for human rights are cornerstones of sustainable development. While NEPAD commits African leaders to take greater responsibility for their own affairs, it also recognizes the need for external help.

As part of its support for strengthening African peace and security, Canada has named special envoys to support peace processes in both the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sudan, and has been active in efforts to prevent illicit trade in diamonds from fuelling armed conflict (see page 12). Through the West Africa Peace and Security Initiative, Canada is working in the critical areas of policing, peace support operations and addressing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

To this end, Canada is supporting the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre in Accra, Ghana. While the centre officially opened in January, officials from Canada's Pearson Peacekeeping Centre taught the inaugural course there last November on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. For two weeks, 42 mostly African participants covered topics ranging from crowd control to the destruction of unwanted weapons using sledgehammers, oxyacetylene torches and grinding machines.

"The course materials draw on a wide range of actual peace support exercises," says Kees Steenken of the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, who led the training sessions. Some lessons from previous peace support missions in

Namibia, Mozambique and Angola, for example, were applied in El Salvador and Nicaragua. The Central American experiences in turn influenced practices in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

"The African participants noted that Africa was the source for much of the course information, and that many had endured or experienced the issues first-hand," Steenken says. "There are many who specialize in the field, but the information is not readily available."

Leadership in action

Canada is delivering on its commitments to NEPAD and, in the year ahead, will keep Africa on the global agenda through the Africa Partnership Forum, a Canadian initiative that for the first time brings together high-level representatives of the G8 and other donor countries, multilateral agencies and African partners.

"Our role is to support the continent's priorities because it's the right thing to do, but also because it's in Canada's best interests," says Minister Graham. "With increasing globalization, Canadians cannot remain safe in an unstable world—or prosperous in a world stricken by poverty." 🍁

For more information on Canada's initiatives in Africa, see www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/canadafundforafrica and www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/africa.

CANADA, AFRICA AND LA FRANCOPHONIE

Member countries of La Francophonie have accepted the New Partnership for Africa's Development as a historic opportunity to strengthen partnerships within Africa—and between Africa and the rest of the international community—to promote democratization, economic growth and people-centred development in Africa. In addition, says the new Minister responsible for La Francophonie, Denis Coderre, "there is a tremendous sensitivity that Canadians and our government have regarding Africa. We need to help those most in need, but in the way of a partnership, and to provide them with tools."

Minister Coderre travelled to Paris last December to meet with his colleague ministers from La Francophonie to plan the upcoming biennial summit of Francophonie-member heads of state and government. The summit will be held in Ouagadougou,

Burkina Faso in November, with a theme of sustainable development. "It is a new era for La Francophonie," notes Minister Coderre, "And anything that we work on today will have a tremendous impact over the next 10 years."

And for the first time in the organization's history, the Secretary General of La Francophonie is African. Abdou Diouf, the former President of Senegal, was elected to the position in December 2002. 🍁

Canada World View will have coverage of the Burkina Faso summit in an upcoming issue.

In the meantime, for more information on La Francophonie have a look at www.canada-francophonie.gc.ca.

