

violations might escape judgement. At the time of writing, the Guatemalan courts have not rendered any decisions on the cases before them with respect to the amnesty.

Guatemala's poverty indices have not changed: 76 per cent live in poverty with 54 in extreme poverty. The socio-economic sub-accord of May 1996 does not provide for land reform, merely some future redistribution of idle land. Land occupations continue to be a highly contentious problem. Murders, kidnappings, attacks and intimidation of labour leaders have increased. Increasingly since 1995, there has been concern about acts of intimidation against workers in the "maquila" industries. There have been no significant advances on the rights of women, children or the disabled since last year. However, the Peace Accords provide a number of standards and targets in terms of increasing government revenues and increased expenditures on education, health and other social purposes, which, if realized effectively, could lead to significant improvements in a number of key areas.

### CANADIAN POSITION

Respect for human rights remains the central issue in Canada's relations with Guatemala. Again this year, our concerns about the general human rights situation as well as numerous specific cases, some linked to the refugee return process, have been raised regularly with Guatemalan authorities at all levels, including the President and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and the Interior. The Embassy keeps in touch with and provides moral support to representatives of the popular movement and civil society in general, including human rights groups, NGOs, churches, labour unions, journalists, academic organizations and members of the Assembly of Civil Society. The Embassy also met regularly with the three foremost human rights monitoring organizations in Guatemala: the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman, the Office of Human Rights of the Archbishop and MINUGUA.

The \$5 million second phase of the Democratic Development Fund continues to support projects in areas including women's rights, indigenous Mayan rights, the fight against impunity, assistance in drafting laws for Congress, and training in conflict resolution for NGOs, Mayas, the media and judges. The Canada Fund also supports grass-roots projects in the human rights area. The \$8 million second phase of the Local Development Project includes strong women and indigenous development components. Canada continues to provide two civilian police human rights monitors to MINUGUA.

At the 52nd Commission on Human Rights (CHR) and the Third Committee of the 51st UN General Assembly, Canada expressed its continuing concern about the human rights situation in Guatemala in its country statements. In recent years, Guatemala has been the subject of a consensus resolution at the CHR. Canada supports the mandate of the Independent Expert, Dr. Monica Pinto, appointed under the Advisory Services provision, and the Embassy is in regular contact with her. It is expected that the Government of Guatemala will mount a sustained effort to end Dr. Pinto's mission at the next CHR, arguing that with the conclusion of the Peace Accords, her mission is no longer necessary. Canada does not agree with this line of argument.