

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND
INTERNATIONAL TRADE

N.B.: Unless otherwise indicated, all dollar figures in the Government Response are expressed in Canadian dollars.

Introduction

The Government thanks the Chair of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Chair and Members of the Sub-Committee on Human Rights and International Development for the work that led to the June 2003 report *HIV/AIDS and the Humanitarian Catastrophe in Sub-Saharan Africa*.

The Government commends the Sub-Committee for the decision to focus on HIV/AIDS and humanitarian crises in sub-Saharan Africa. Qualitatively and quantitatively, sub-Saharan Africa is more seriously affected by these questions than any other region in the world. The Sub-Committee's timely attention reflects a widespread concern among Canadians and Parliamentarians on the effects of these issues in Africa and on Africans, and what Canada can and should be doing to help address these problems. The Government shares these concerns.

The Report has identified five key issues surrounding humanitarian crises in sub-Saharan Africa: the HIV/AIDS pandemic; food shortages and famine; the sometimes weak application of human rights, democracy and good governance; the situation in Zimbabwe; and, armed conflicts. The Government also commends the Sub-Committee's decision to focus on these factors. They are all either fundamental to future stability and prosperity in the region or dominate the political discourse. These elements also address directly key elements of Canada's foreign policy priorities: our interest in a stable, secure and prosperous world; and, the projection of Canadian values overseas, such as democratic development, rule of law and human rights.

In the September 2002 Speech from the Throne, the Government stated its intention to provide increased support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the African initiative to achieve sustainable growth. This reaffirmed Canada's commitment, dating from the 2001 G8 Summit in Italy, to place Africa at the forefront of the international agenda in guiding the G8 response to NEPAD.

Canada, as Chair of the G8 in 2002, provided the international leadership to accomplish this task. In spite of an unpredictable international environment and tumultuous events—the September 2001 terrorist attacks and war in Afghanistan—the Prime Minister ensured Africa remained a principal item at the Kananaskis Summit. The adoption of the G8 Africa Action Plan at that Summit complements NEPAD by defining a new partnership between G8 and African countries, and focusses, among other things, on providing resources to address many of the elements identified in the Sub-Committee's report.