

2. HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRATIZATION AND GOOD GOVERNANCE: POLICY AND OBJECTIVES FOR CIDA

Human rights are founded on the inherent dignity of the human person. As the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, states, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." Democratization builds the effective participation of individuals in decision making and the exercise of power in society, both through the formal processes of democracy, and through the organizations of civil society that give voice to popular concerns. Good governance ensures the effective, honest, equitable and accountable exercise of power by governments.

The values that underlie human rights, democracy and good governance -- among them respect for human dignity, justice, equity, participation and accountability -- are deeply held throughout the world. Their importance to Canadians is demonstrated in efforts to address concerns about rights at many levels in our own society, through the framework of law, through federal and provincial institutions, and in the work of community-based organizations throughout the country.

Respect for human rights, democratization and good governance are important, in their own right, for the security of individual children, women and men and the development of the societies in which they live. These three issues are integral to CIDA's purpose, to promote sustainable development in developing countries in order to reduce poverty and to contribute to a more secure, equitable and prosperous world. CIDA's vision of sustainable development builds on the inherent link

between political, economic, environmental, social and cultural processes in all societies and seeks to integrate this understanding into the Agency's efforts to promote development. Underpinning this vision is the recognition that the equitable distribution of power and resources within and between societies, and public participation in decision making, are critical to the success of CIDA's work.

Together, respect for rights, democratization and good governance create the framework of society within which the development efforts of people, whether working as individuals, as groups in civil society, or through their governments, can be effective. Canada's interest in a more just, more stable and more prosperous world requires that the Canadian government, through the development assistance program, addresses rights, democracy and governance concerns in the context of promoting sustainable development. CIDA's dialogue and program initiatives are important instruments for expressing Canadian values, and in working to build a more just, secure and prosperous world for all.

With respect to the development cooperation program administered by CIDA, the Government's policy is to enhance the will and capacity of developing country societies to respect the rights of children, women and men, and to govern effectively and in a democratic manner.