

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

Canada has played a leading role in helping the international community adopt more effective approaches to working with African countries in their development. Canada's leadership in advancing the *Africa Action Plan* at the G8 Kananaskis Summit in June 2002 is the most recent example.

The challenges facing Africa today are enormous and complex. Nevertheless, progress is being made. Africa is the poorest continent in the world at present, yet economic reform has allowed significant growth in the number of successful small and medium-sized businesses. The number of Internet providers has increased more than thirty-fold in the past five years. Among African countries, 42 have held democratic, multi-party elections since the beginning of the 1990s.

The need for action is compelling. The *New Partnership for Africa's Development* (NEPAD) is a made-in-Africa plan to reduce poverty and promote sustainable growth and development. First and foremost, it is a pledge by African



leaders to the citizens of Africa to consolidate democracy, pursue sound economic management and promote peace, security and people-focused development. African leaders have personally directed NEPAD's creation and have formally undertaken to hold each other accountable for its achievement. At Kananaskis, G8 leaders welcomed this commitment by unanimously adopting the *G8 Africa Action Plan*, the framework for action in support of NEPAD.

NEPAD and the *Africa Action Plan* focus on the conditions that need to be created by African governments, with the assistance of development partners, to generate greater public and private resources to finance development and stimulate economic growth. Both initiatives recognize the

fundamental importance of good governance, peace and security and human rights as preconditions for sustainable development and poverty reduction. This "new partnership" marks a proposal for joint action to address Africa's problems, first cementing a commitment between African leaders and their peoples, and second, between Africa and the international community. There can be no development without both of these partnerships succeeding.

Canada recently announced a commitment of \$6 billion in new and existing resources over five years in support of Africa's development, including the \$500 million Canada Fund for Africa. New initiatives will bring together governments, the private sector and civil society to promote African innovation, human development and critical infrastructure services. Highlights from the Canada Fund for Africa include:

- efforts to foster economic development by eliminating tariffs and quotas on most imports from the 48 Least Developed Countries, of which 34 are in Africa;
- strengthening institutions and governance with an investment of \$28 million to support the development of skills and expertise in the public sector in countries committed to improving governance, including financial accountability and economic policy;
- \$9 million to strengthen the role of the parliamentary system in countries committed to political reform;
- \$6 million to improve local governance by working with African partners to develop new approaches to providing basic community needs, such as access to water, sanitation and health;
- doubling Canada's investment in basic education to \$100 million each year by 2005;
- contributing \$50 million towards the development of an HIV vaccine; and
- \$50 million to help eradicate polio.

It follows that concrete steps taken by the world community to advance sustainable development will contribute to improved conditions in Africa. For these reasons, Canada will encourage the WSSD to include a focus on the importance of African development in the context of international sustainable development efforts.

For more information on this and other issues that Canada will pursue at the WSSD, consult Canada's World Summit Web site at www.wssd-smdd.gc.ca.

