

**REMARKS BY H.E. MR. PAUL HEINBECKER, AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF CANADA TO THE UNITED NATIONS****BEFORE THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE ON THE
SITUATION IN AFRICA****NEW YORK, JANUARY 29, 2002**

Mr. President,

It is approaching half a century since most African states were born and Africans re-assumed responsibility for their own affairs. There is much progress to celebrate since that time.

Child mortality rates have dropped dramatically since the Fifties, although not as far or fast as elsewhere. Life expectancy has also grown, although the progress made is being eroded by HIV/AIDS. And Africa has seen primary, secondary and university enrolment increase markedly, outstripping global average growth in all categories.

The literacy rate in sub-Saharan Africa has almost doubled over the past 30 years. Africa's share of gross world product has, however, dropped substantially, even while Africa's share of the globe's population almost doubled in the past half century. And GDP per capita in Africa has remained stubbornly static, despite a half century of effort.

There are many reasons for these disappointing economic results. But the most obvious is conflicts.

Africa offers regrettably dramatic evidence of the colossal cost of unchecked conflict. Angola, Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Sudan are all stories of de-development caused at least in part by conflict. And Zimbabwe is on the watch list.

Conflict is responsible for more death and displacement than famine or flood. (Only HIV/AIDS, itself worsened by conflict, is exacting a worse cost.)

One African in five lives daily with conflict or civil war. Civilian casualties increase year by year, and now far outstrip any other region of the world.

There are about 19 million refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Africa- the highest in the world -both a cause and an effect of conflict.

Apart from the direct, devastating effect of these conflicts on the people of Africa, the indirect are striking: health and education systems disrupted or destroyed, diseases such as HIV/AIDS out of control, agriculture abandoned, economic growth stalled, investment delayed, the promotion and protection of human rights, democratic development and good governance, undermined by lawlessness and violence.

Countries caught in conflict lose ground to the rest of the world every day, contributing to the marginalization of Africa as a whole.

In this distressing context, it is especially encouraging that African leaders have themselves said "enough". And have summoned the political will and policy resources to launch the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NePAD), a strategy by Africans for Africans.

In NePAD, African leaders both forthrightly acknowledge the extent of the problems affecting Africa and their corrosive effects on the nations and people of Africa, and squarely declare their determination to act. By NePAD, African leaders undertake to strengthen mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution at the regional and continental levels and to ensure that these mechanisms are used. NePAD is a document of leadership and vision. It makes clear that the economic and social marginalization of Africa is inimical to global stability.

Such marginalization diminishes and endangers us all. NePAD puts the onus on Africans to act to end that marginalization. It is also a call for partnership that Canada supports fully.

At the Genoa Summit last July, the G-8 welcomed the NePAD; G-8 leaders indicated support for key themes of the NePAD and established a group of personal representatives to develop a G-8 response.

Under the chairmanship of Canada this year, NePAD will be a principal focus of discussion at the June 2002 G-8 summit in Kananaskis. G-8 leaders will appropriately respond to the tragic events of September 11, without however displacing Africa from their agenda.

G-8 leaders will adopt at Kananaskis a concrete plan of action to respond to the invitation of African leaders to partnership in an African-owned and led development process. The goal is to put a new partnership in place that will unlock much greater resources, public and private, over time.

In its December budget, the Government of Canada committed \$500 million Canadian (\$300 million US plus) in support of the G-8 Africa initiative.

On Friday this week, Prime Minister Chrétien will address African issues before global business leaders at the World Economic Forum here in New York.

As for the UN, and the Security Council, much effort has been expended, and much of that successfully both to prevent and to respond to crises in Africa.

Action is better than reaction. Prevention is worth the proverbial pound of cure.

We would urge all Council members to support the innovative suggestion that an informal working group of the Council be established to discuss prevention cases on a more regular basis, and especially to consider early warning cases referred to it.

The use of both Council missions and inter-agency fact-finding missions have proven their value, and we welcome the Council commitment to the use of those tools.

The great risk and the exorbitant costs, human and financial, of taking action after violent conflict has erupted are perhaps the best incentives for acting to prevent conflict in the first

place. When prevention fails, our duty to protect civilians begins. Nowhere is it more pressing than in Africa.

The Secretary-General's two reports on the protection of civilians and the Council's two resolutions 1265 and 1296 on the same subject, warrant intense follow-up.

The challenge is to transform the intentions found in these resolutions as well as in the 1261 on children and armed conflict, and 1325 the groundbreaking resolution on women and peace and security, and the many recommendations made by the Secretary-General into a program of action and ultimately, a record of achievements.

I think it appropriate that I underline in this Council the importance Canada attaches to protecting civilians in armed conflict.

We know the challenges:

- the lack of safe and unhindered access for the delivery of humanitarian assistance;
- the forced conscription of children below the age of 18;
- landmines;
- the relationship between military and humanitarian action and actors in conflict zones;
- the question of safe zones and corridors;
- the use of neighbouring countries as an access point for relief delivery;
- the need for parties to the conflict to comply with international humanitarian and human rights law, and for neighbouring countries to respect refugees law;
- the presence of armed elements in camps for would-be asylum seekers and the location of camps too close to borders, exposing civilians to risk.

In most contemporary conflicts, combatants have had an appalling record of abuse of civilians. In this context, the Council has rightly given UN forces in Sierra Leone an explicit mandate to protect civilians. It should make such a protection of civilians a standard feature of peace operations mandates.

I would also like to underline the importance of addressing the situation of war-affected children.

Children are not only victims in today's conflicts, but they are also important participants.

Canada strongly supports the priorities for international action identified at the International conference on War-Affected Children held in Winnipeg in September 2000. That conference laid out strategies to prevent the recruitment of child soldiers and to address the needs of children and adolescents in situations of armed conflict.

On the crucial issue, Canada strongly and actively supports the full implementation of the groundbreaking Resolution 1325.

More broadly, we need collectively to address effectively proliferation of small arms and light weapons (and landmines). The devastation wreaked by these small arms of mass destruction is too important to tolerate. Last summer the UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms made a positive, if insufficient, step forward.

We need now to:

1. implement the program of action, incomplete though it is;
2. establish procedures for the destruction of surpluses;
3. negotiate a legally binding instrument on marking;
4. control or prohibit exports to non-state actors; and
5. through DDR and related programs, mop up as many existing weapons as possible.

And put as many combatants back to work as possible.

Further, the Council should take steps to penalize transport firms, especially air transport firms that flout Council decisions on weapons transfers. There is plenty of evidence available to the Council from the Angola, and other, sanctions reports to show who the violators are. Countries that harbour them must be brought to account before the Council.

The acid test for the protection of civilians agenda has always been whether the commitments made in Resolutions 1265 and 1296, 1262 and 1325 would be honoured, or the recommendations made by the Secretary-General would be adopted by the Council. We therefore welcome the Secretariat's intention to re-visit its own performance and we encourage the Council to do likewise.

OCHA should continue to act as a catalyst for on-going change.

On the issue of refugees, there have been positive examples of co-operation. Notably, we welcome the UNHCR/OAU action plan. The December 2001 UNHCR meeting with African Ministers was a positive step in this context.

More broadly on peace-building in Africa, as elsewhere, more work needs to be done on the transition phase from humanitarian relief to development. We see a lead role in this area for the UN, particularly the UNDP, with reconstruction primarily the responsibility of the World Bank and the African Development Bank and, of course, supported by the OAU.

At the same time, we need to get at the economic fuel that fires so many conflicts - natural resources.

In Africa, to paraphrase Clausewitz, war has become economics pursued through other means. Whatever the original cause of these conflicts, it is economic greed now that perpetuates them and blocks peace.

To a citizen of a country, Canada, to which natural resources have brought so much benefit, it is especially distressing that African resource wealth should be a curse for so many Africans, not a blessing, a cause of violence and despair.

Canada fully supports the efforts being made by this Council and the international community to end these abuses.

Further, regional organizations, such as ECOWAS, and SADC and the OAU itself have critical roles to play.

Canada has been a member of the "Friends of the OAU" Group who have supported the OAU

restructuring process. One area of particular interest is the regional security field, and in particular the organization's conflict prevention mechanism. The conflict prevention mechanism provides the foundation for the kind of security architecture found in some other regional organizations which permit them to address, with confidence and among equals, the security problems facing many Africans. The mechanism provided real value added, as demonstrated by its support of President Bouteflika in reaching a peace accord between Ethiopia and Eritrea. We are particularly pleased to see that this mechanism is to be preserved intact in the transition from OAU to the AU.

This is indicative of the kind of leadership role that the OAU/AU can play in continental peace and security issues. We look forwards to the expansion of the OAU/AU's peace and security role beyond technical expertise to political support for conflict prevention and resolution.

To conclude, the most solemn duty of governments is to protect their own citizens. And the most basic responsibility of the United Nations is to help them.

Let us pledge to work together to acquit our common duty to restore peace and stability through Africa.

The long-suffering people of Africa have made progress in many fields. They deserve the opportunity to go further and raise their standards of living to global norms.

It is necessary. It is possible. And it is urgent.

Thank you.

Canada