



African Stability: A Role for Canada?

Group of 78 Annual Policy Conference 2006

- Foreign Policy Recommendations -

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Econiche House: 32 River Road, Cantley, Quebec J8Y 3A1

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Introduction

At its Annual Policy Conference and General Meeting, held September 29 - October 1, 2006, in Cantley, QC, the Group of 78 adopted a series of recommendations for the Government of Canada calling for both immediate action and longer term policy development.

The theme of the conference was *African Stability: A Role for Canada*. Other issues discussed included human rights, the proliferation of nuclear weapons and public accountability.

A. Overarching Concern

Return Human Rights to the Core of Canadian Foreign Policy

Gravely concerned about the decline in emphasis on human rights in Canadian foreign policy in recent years,

The Group of 78 calls on the Government of Canada and Canadian civil society to reaffirm and reinvigorate the overarching role of the protection and advancement of human rights in Canadian foreign policy.

B. Urgent Action in Africa

1. Support for International Forces in Darfur

In view of the continuing genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan ,

The Group of 78 calls on the Government of Canada to

a) vigorously pursue diplomatic efforts, including the possible application of targeted sanctions on the leadership of the Republic of Sudan, to ensure a rapid Chapter 7 deployment of a UN Peacekeeping Force to the region;

b) commit to providing substantial support for such a deployment;

and, in the interim,

c) greatly enhance Canadian support for the current African Union deployment with a view to ensuring its effectiveness;

• continue to provide substantial humanitarian assistance to victims of the conflict; and

e) actively support diplomatic and civil society efforts to find lasting, peaceful solutions to the conflict.

2. Zimbabwe : the Possible Indictment of Robert Mugabe

Viewing with dismay the deteriorating standard of living of the great majority of Zimbabwe 's people to the point of despair and widespread starvation; and, in particular,

• the flight into exile of millions, including three million to South Africa ;

• the demolition in major cities of the so-called “shanty-towns” and destruction of the livelihood of an estimated 500,000 people who depended on the informal economy;

• the chaos created in August with the re-evaluation of the currency and the soaring inflation rate; and

Recalling the action by the international community in committing Charles Taylor, former Liberian leader, to trial at the International Criminal Court;

The Group of 78 urges the Government of Canada to take active and public measures to show its support for the struggling people of Zimbabwe and to pursue vigorously the possibility of indicting Robert Mugabe for crimes against humanity .

In so doing, the Group of 78 notes the report in June 2006 of the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum which confirms that

- 136 people were tortured by the Zimbabwe Republic Police in 2005,
- a further 4,000 were ill-treated while in custody.

It identifies 15,000 documented violations of human rights as well as the unsolved violent deaths of Zimbabwean leaders, reaching back to the car bomb assassination of the early ZANU-PF leader Herbert Chitepo, and the suspected poisoning of journalist-editor Willie Musarurwa and the flouting of the constitution by Robert Mugabe, most recently by delaying presidential elections until 2010.

3. Protection of Minorities: the Anuak People of Ethiopia

Noting that over three days beginning on December 13, 2003, members of the Ethiopian military and militias murdered 424 Anuak people in Gambella town in south western Ethiopia, burning houses and scattering families,

Concerned that these murders have continued, now numbering between 1500 and 2500 deaths in the total Anuak population of 100,000 and that they constitute just one example of massacres being committed in many parts of Africa and throughout the world against minorities , and

Aware that powerful groups, often national governments, pursue near-genocidal policies to remove local people from their traditional land so that resource extraction and mega projects can be accomplished unimpeded,

The Group of 78 calls on the Government of Canada to engage the Government of Ethiopia on the issue of the Anuak.

It further calls on the Government of Canada to use every possible means

- **to expose, stop and prevent the mass killing of minority peoples,**
- **to pursue the strengthening of international laws that protect all human rights, in particular the rights of minorities, including the vigorous use of**

the International Criminal Court, and

- **to adopt legislation that would explicitly prohibit Canadian businesses from profiting from crimes against humanity.**

C. Peace, Stability and Humanitarian Intervention in Africa

1. The Responsibility to Protect

In light of its consideration of the various roles Canada might play in enhancing stability in Africa , and

Recalling Canada 's initiative which led to the adoption by the United Nations Summit Conference (2005) of the concept of the Responsibility to Protect,

The Group of 78 urges the Government of Canada to emphasize that military intervention must be the last, and not the first resort in any humanitarian intervention.

2. Control of the Arms Trade

In light of the role played by small arms and light weapons in African conflicts and of the widespread trade in arms on the continent,

The Group of 78 calls on the Government of Canada to

- **actively support the Arms Trade Treaty proposal initiated by the United Kingdom, thereby building on Canada's success in the campaigns which led to the Anti-Personnel Land Mines Treaty and the establishment of the International Criminal Court; and**
- **work within the structure of this treaty to prevent the use of small arms and light weapons by child soldiers, criminal elements, and illicit rebel groups, with particular attention to Africa .**

Key areas of concern to be addressed include

- implementation of monitoring mechanisms to verify end-users;
- effective controls on re-exportation, and;
- curtailment of the role of arms brokers.

D. Governance

1. Support for the African Peer Review Mechanism

Recognizing that the strengthening of systems of governance in Africa is fundamental to the creation of stable and secure societies and that Africans themselves must play the lead role in this process,

The Group of 78 calls on the Government of Canada to continue to support strongly the African Peer Review Mechanism.

Key elements of this support will involve

- providing enhanced investment to countries that demonstrate the will to strengthen and sustain good governance;
- assisting in financing the costs of the implementation of national plans of action, and;
- ensuring that Canadian support be provided for the participation of local civil society in APRM processes.

2. Strengthening of National Parliamentary and Judicial Institutions

In view of the central roles of both effective parliaments and professional and independent judiciaries in the maintenance of stable secure societies , and of the necessity of separating the needs of developing countries from the political objectives of donor states,

The Group of 78 calls on the Government of Canada to support the strengthening of parliamentary and judiciary systems throughout Africa to encourage genuine democracy, including dialogue between governments and opposition parties. In particular, a government's support of the 'so-called' war on terror should not override human rights.

3. The Empowerment of Women

Understanding that women are central to the economic and social life and stability of African societies and the consequent need to reflect that role, and full gender equality, in political and social decision-making processes at the international, national and local levels,

The Group of 78 calls on the Government of Canada to

- **adapt and apply the principles of gender equality agreed upon in UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (October 2000 resolution on Women, Peace and Security) to its work in Africa with relevance to women's health, social and economic issues;**
- **work to strengthen the institutional capacity of the UN and other multilateral international institutions to address women's issues, especially HIV/AIDS and other transmittable diseases in Africa ; and**
- **elaborate a Canadian national plan of action related to the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 and continue to assist African countries in doing the same.**

4. Transparency in the Extractive Industries

Recognizing the negative impact that extractive industries, most particularly the production of petroleum, gold and diamonds, can have on both good governance and stability in African states, and acknowledging at the same time the central role that extractive industries play in their economies,

The Group of 78 calls on the Government of Canada to

- **support the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative of the British government to encourage the development of international standards regarding full disclosure of all the implications regarding resource extraction projects.** This initiative seeks to establish new international standards of transparency with respect to payments from international resource extraction firms to host governments. Such disclosure would allow the dissemination of information, thus empowering local communities and civil society in both North and South both to identify instances of corruption and to track the use of such funds.
- **implement in Canada a government-wide anti-corruption and money laundering policy with respect to the activities of Canadian companies abroad, in view of the severe detrimental effect of corruption on governance in Africa and elsewhere. This policy would apply equally to purchasing by government and the supplying of goods to the public sector.**

E. Health and Economic Development

1. Renewed Commitment to African Development

Understanding the continuing need for development assistance as an essential element in the strengthening of both social and political stability in Africa and its critical role in supporting transparency, good governance and economic development,

The Group of 78 calls on the Government of Canada to

- **fulfill its commitment to allocate 0.7% GDP to official development assistance before the end of the decade;**
- **restore and maintain the public commitment to African development that was demonstrated in the Canadian response to the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD); and**
- **in paying special attention to Africa , place greater emphasis on the provision of health services to women and children.**

2. Addressing HIV-AIDS

In view of the devastating impact of HIV-AIDS on the social fabric and economic life of the African continent,

The Group of 78 calls on the Government of Canada to

- **resolve the impasse between pharmaceutical companies and African countries to assure that anti-retroviral drugs become available and are speedily supplied to Africans ; and**
- **support NGOs that are working to ease ‘ brain drain’ so that health care professionals are prepared to continue working in countries where the health crisis is greatest.**

3. Secure Market Access for African Products

Believing that African stability will be greatly enhanced through the development of secure and equitable export markets,

The Group of 78 calls on the Government of Canada to support measures to secure greater access to markets by African producers through the resumption of the Doha round, or its equivalent, and the reduction of agricultural subsidies in developed countries.

F. The On-going Threat of Nuclear War

In addition to its focus on Africa , the conference also considered the threat posed by substantial and growing stockpiles and continued nuclear proliferation.

1. Canada and Nuclear Weapons

Given the current expansion of NATO countries and the growing threat of nuclear confrontation, and

Recalling that the first objective of the Group of 78 is “the removal of the threat of nuclear war”,

Concerned that Canada continues to support the NATO nuclear weapons policy of maintaining and enhancing their efficacy indefinitely, and

Dismayed by the US nuclear posture review, its strategy of nuclear war fighting and possible first use, and its withdrawal of support for the Thirteen Steps of the Non-Proliferation Treaty,

The Group of 78 calls on the Government of Canada to support actively the implementation of the recommendations of the report of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, *Weapons of Terror: Freeing the World of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Arms.*