

Airport Shuttle

Two shuttles were leased for the event; one 8 passenger van which was used throughout the event as general transportation to pick up supplies, transport the cashier to do bank deposits and other on-going tasks. The second 15 passenger van was used as transportation for delegates from the airport to the downtown Vancouver hotels for the period of November 18-20. This service was operated in conjunction with an information/welcoming booth at the International Arrivals level of Vancouver Airport and was successful in transporting approximately 20 - 30 people a day. Volunteers staffed the information desk and acted as shuttle drivers.

There were no complaints/comments registered with the Secretariat regarding this service. The volunteers on site felt that the service was well received. With lower-than-anticipated numbers of overseas participants, this relatively modest level of service turned out to be fairly appropriate to the demand. However, there were instances where we could have benefited from having a second airport shuttle available. Had funds been available, in addition to the extra van, it would have been worthwhile to have hired a driver (as opposed to relying on volunteers) and to outfit them with a cellular phone in order to ensure a more coordinated and punctual service.

Translation

After much consideration, it was decided that it would not be feasible to undertake translation services, since simultaneous translation would prove to be financially prohibitive. As a solution, it was decided that any language difficulties would be dealt with as they arose, by taking advantage of the numerous multilingual staff, volunteers, and participants that were on-site. Since the Summit was billed as an English-speaking event, few participants experienced communication problems. Where there were difficulties, as in the case of the two Chiapas representatives, Spanish translators from amongst the participants were on hand to provide elbow translation. In the case of the Cameroon participant, billeting was provided with a French speaking couple.

Security Issues

The RCMP provided two liaison officers for the Summit, who proved to be our main contact with regard to security on-site as well as planning for the march/rally. Two plainclothes police were present (at our request) at the airport to monitor the arrival of Jose Ramos-Horta as well as throughout the day of November 19, one of our busiest days, which included Mr. Ramos-Horta's keynote speech at the Opening Ceremonies.

In addition, numerous security guards were hired at additional cost from the Plaza of Nations to ensure the safety of participants and equipment, both indoors and outdoors. No security problems were encountered during the Summit.

On-site Communications

BC Tel Mobility gave us the use of eight cell phones that were used by staff immediately preceding and during the Summit. This made efficient on-site communications possible. In addition, the on-site Internet benefited from the support of BC Tel Advanced Communications by way of a high speed Internet connection that they supplied.