

3. Economic Integration as the Key to Growth and Development: Focus on Business

Initiatives aimed at deeper economic integration of the Hemisphere were high on the agenda of the business representatives including, Susan Gardiner of the Business Council on National Issues, Dave Hecnar, and Halina Ostrovski from the Canadian Council for the Americas. They stressed the importance of a free market economy for growth and development in the Americas today. However, they agreed that the spread of free markets should be accompanied by the development of a clear and transparent legal and regulatory framework. Ostrovski emphasised the importance of developing a business culture in the region (including, strong democratic institutions, confidence, trust and entrepreneurial spirit). Some of the specific recommendations included:

- FTAA negotiations should be conducted in the context of WTO processes.
- Integration could be enhanced by the removal of bureaucratic barriers (paperwork and delays at the Customs).

Dave Hecnar pointed out that the ultimate goals of business and other civil society representatives are identical, since they all share the same basic values as Canadians. There is a common interest in helping to firmly establish the rule of law, build and strengthen democratic institutions, and create a fair economic environment. The difference rests in how to achieve these goals. It is this difference in "means" that poses challenges.

4. Initiatives in Education

Based on his experience, Pierre Van Der Donkt of the Organisation Universitaire Inter-americaine suggested that Canada take advantage of its expertise to build initiatives aimed at academic mobility and help strengthen the system of higher education in Latin America. Patrick Hyndman, AUCC, and Cynthia Morel, UNESCO, have reviewed the capacity of their organisations to play role in the Hemisphere. Among the activities they mentioned was expanding educational and scientific networks, disseminating and exchanging information, promoting the role of education in development, and creating tools and programmes for youth.

3. Initiatives in Disaster Relief: Building Resilient Communities

Kate White of Black and White Communications, suggested that given the global climate change, Canada could develop an initiative aimed at mitigating the results of natural disasters. She argued that capacity-building initiatives that help communities prepare for disasters would be particularly useful. Focus should be directed towards youth and women and their education (including the curriculum development and school infrastructure building).

Kate White pointed out that developing a "culture of prevention" is among the responsibilities of any government today. It could be one of the cross-cutting themes adopted in the Hemisphere agenda, since the concept involves Human Security, governance and a focus on