

The interest of Canadians in Latin America and the Caribbean has been increasing over the years. This growing interest reflects the enormous opportunities offered by the region and the role Canada can and should play in its political, economic and social development. Canada's expanded involvement in the region and the inter-American system over the past 10 years, including in the Summit process, has stimulated greater attention from diverse groups of citizens. The *Declaration, Plan of Action* and *Statement on Connectivity* of the Third Summit of the Americas provide a framework within which citizens may contribute to and take fuller advantage of the hemispheric cooperation process.

The Report underlines the importance, at both the national and hemispheric level, of promoting greater transparency, of engaging non-governmental actors, also referred to as civil society, and of enhancing the role played by parliamentarians. Recommendations by the Committee allow for further consideration as to how the Government might best pursue the dialogue with citizens, with parliamentarians and with provincial and territorial governments. The Report underscores the need to strike a balance between international trade agreements and other, equally important international obligations, including in areas such as human rights, the environment and labour. The Report also recommends accession by Canada to the American Convention on Human Rights. The Report is of significant assistance to the Government as it provides an opportunity to assess Government objectives, review accomplishments and determine future directions. The Government generally subscribes to the recommendations contained in the Report, consistent with post-Summit strategy.

BALANCING PRIORITIES AND LINKING ISSUES

(RECOMMENDATION 1)

“GIVEN THE IMPORTANCE OF THE QUESTION OF THE ENFORCEABILITY OF OBLIGATIONS IN THE FIELDS OF HUMAN RIGHTS, LABOUR STANDARDS, THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE PROTECTION OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY, AND THE LACK OF AGREEMENT AS TO WHETHER THEY MAY BEST BE ENFORCED THROUGH INCLUSION IN TRADE AGREEMENTS OR BY OTHER MEANS, THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA STUDY THE QUESTION OF HOW THESE OBLIGATIONS MAY BEST BE ENFORCED, AND TABLE ITS FINDINGS WITH THE COMMITTEE BY APRIL 2002.”

The Government will be pleased to conduct a study on alternative means of enforcement and to submit its recommendations to the Committee. While the scope of the study might hinder the capacity of the Government to present its results by April 2002, the Government is committed to informing the Committee of its progress on that date.

