

5.3 At least one participant disagreed that cooperation between the public, private and voluntary sectors to elaborate codes of corporate conduct was the most effective approach to domestic collaboration on international human rights. A more promising (though untested) direction was for the Government to facilitate private and voluntary sector discussion on funding mechanisms enabling Canadian corporations to play a proactive role in support of global human rights.

5.4 The Government can play an important role in enhancing Canadian technical capacities, particularly to enable "people-to-people" exchanges with other societies. How can our domestic expertise on technical subjects, such as policies to combat hate propaganda, be disseminated internationally? There may be potential synergies between Canadian hardware and software communications expertise, and human rights education or access to information. There is also considerable potential to raise awareness of global human rights through the domestic education system. One university, for example, runs a student project that examines human rights in Canadian foreign policy. Further attention should also be given to strengthening the role Canadian electronic and print media can play in assisting journalists and the development of independent media abroad.

5.5 In a peacebuilding scenario, NGOs have potential to develop a "witness" role in monitoring human rights. Their presence may serve to reduce or prevent further abuses in a humanitarian emergency. Is there a mechanism to assist NGOs to remain in conflict zones to play a "witness" role?

5.6 In closing the meeting, the Minister noted that the environmental movement has established high levels of awareness and agreement across Canadian society. Drawing on this analogy, the Minister asked whether this Round table could form part of a process to work towards greater coherence among NGOs on Canada's role in international human rights.