

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE PANEL PRESENTATIONS AND PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

OPENING PLENARY:

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

Paul Heinbecker: "The Universal Declaration at 50: New Challenges and New Opportunities for Canadian Foreign Policy"

Paul Heinbecker discussed the role of Canadian foreign policy in protecting human rights, which is adapting to a world of interconnectivity and dissolving state sovereignty. Every country's foreign policy focuses on peace and security, but this is now approached in conjunction with a concern for human rights: *preventing* human rights abuses can be the best way to avoid conflict. Canada has created a niche in the human rights community by directing its efforts to bringing about gradual change from recalcitrant governments; however, along with this comes a need for responsible trade. Canada is also engaged in bilateral programmes to protect human rights such as legal and police training in Indonesia, as well as training for Chinese judges. It is a balance of idealism, which sustains foreign policy objectives, and realism, which is obtained through long experience.

Recommendations for Canadian Foreign Policy

- Heinbecker defended Canada's policy of engagement with countries such as China, Indonesia and Cuba and suggested an increasing need for human rights monitoring and education, either through bilateral initiatives or through adding the strength of our voice to multilateral actions.
- Preventing human rights abuses is the best way to prevent conflict.
- We should not solely target strong states because weak states can be equally guilty of human rights abuses.
- Any human rights strategy will need to be designed on a case-by-case basis and will have to be in balance with the concerns of trade, development and culture. A "one size-fits-all" foreign policy is not effective. States must be taken on an individual basis.