

## Indigenous peoples, minorities and refugees

Group discussion was devoted mainly to the two topics of indigenous peoples and refugees.

### Policy context

#### A: Indigenous peoples

1. Indigenous peoples can and need to speak for themselves and should be provided with the *voice space* to do so. This applies to indigenous peoples in Canada and Asia-Pacific, recognizing that the situation in the latter region is complicated by other categorizations such as minorities, and tribal and other communal designations. Indigenous peoples are pursuing North-South and Canada-Asia-Pacific links, dialogues and activities.
2. Indigenous peoples are adversely affected by non-sustainable economic development such as resource extraction. Indigenous peoples can and do conduct business, but their models for *sustainable development*, which have much to offer, must be acknowledged. In the area of health, there is some recognition of the sciences and knowledge of indigenous and Asian peoples.
3. The Western-based, UN "individual" rights framework is being challenged by Asian and indigenous peoples. An indigenous peoples *framework of collective rights*, which requires responsibilities and benefits for individuals, offers a model that can avoid the dichotomy of Asian collective rights and Western individual rights. Also, Canada has in its indigenous peoples an untapped resource to more constructively engage Asia-Pacific nations in such basic areas as diplomatic practices.
4. Although Canada has the benefit of diversity in ideas, geography and ethnicity, Canada's *credibility* on indigenous peoples issues has suffered since the release of the recent Aboriginal Report.

#### B: Refugees

1. The end of the Cold War has not changed the causes of *refugee crises: they will continue* and new ones will appear.