

NGOs.

- Efforts should be made to move from aid delivery to more development-oriented assistance.
- The Canadian government could insist that aid it provides to the DPRK does not allow diversion of resources toward the development of weapons of mass destruction.
- Attention was raised to the grave humanitarian situation of refugees in the North of the DPRK and in Manchuria.
- Policy options to ensure North Korea's "soft landing" could be considered.

1. The Economic, Social, and Political Conditions in the DPRK

The report of the *Canadian Research Delegation to the DPRK* was outlined at the beginning of the discussion. Some of the delegates, present at the roundtable, said they were surprised with the level of access granted to them by the DPRK authorities during their visit. The difficulty for foreigners to develop personal relationships with North Koreans and the constant struggle for access to information were noted. The ability to venture beyond Pyongyang, allowed the delegates to assess economic and social conditions in rural areas. They have concluded that, compounded by the withdrawal of subsidies in the 1990's, a cold winter, poor crops, heat shortages, and an insufficient public distribution system have pushed the country to a crisis point and enhanced reliance on foreign aid.

A similar account was given by the representative of the International Physicians

for Global Survival. Through the NGO's hospital visits, the daily hardships faced by North Koreans became evident. For instance, the lack of electricity precluded the installation of a neonatal unit at one hospital. In another, dire shortages of medical supplies were evidenced by

Key recommendations made by the *Canadian Research Delegation to the DPRK* were:

- Continue with humanitarian assistance in the short-term to address critical food shortages and explore ways of moving, in the medium term, from humanitarian assistance to a sustainable development framework.
- Encourage the establishment and expansion of the Canadian NGO presence inside the DPRK.
- Continue existing dialogue mechanisms with the DPRK and look to supplement them in the future with regular academic exchanges and training programmes.
- Promote bilateral exchanges of government officials for purposes of capacity building, sharing of experience, and broadening understanding.
- Encourage governmental discussion on non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament issues.
- Promote parliamentary exchanges
- Encourage business contact.
- Encourage people-to-people contacts.
- Establish formal diplomatic relations as soon as possible.*

* John Manley, Foreign Affairs Minister, announced that Canada established diplomatic relations with the DPRK on February 6, 2001.