

business to effectively play a role in protecting human rights was to promote parallel issues - such as literacy, communications and health - that help strengthen human rights. The ability of the business community to promote such issues at a local level overseas was stressed, and it was suggested that there is a need to raise awareness in the business community of their skills in this area.

The need to develop greater communication and dialogue among international businesses was felt to be another important goal for business. This dialogue could promote the sharing of their successes and failures in improving human rights.

In addition to the role business can play in promoting human rights the small group discussions also illustrated that there is a role for the Canadian government as well. Participants from the business community clearly indicated, however, that the role of government should not involve legislation or regulation, but should be limited to the provision of guidelines and incentives for protecting human rights.

One of the suggestions for the role of government was the facilitation of fora for discussions among businesses as discussed above. It was felt that the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and Canadian diplomatic offices overseas could be involved in facilitating such fora and in monitoring the activities of Canadian businesses working abroad. Diplomatic offices could also be used as a means to promote dialogue with other governments on human rights issues. It was suggested that a human rights desk should exist in all foreign diplomatic offices, especially in high trade areas involving Canada.

The role of trade missions such as "Team Canada" was discussed. It was felt that focusing on very specific issues of human rights could be an effective tool for such trade missions rather than taking a global stance or ignoring the issue altogether. It was also stressed that more care should be taken to ensure that future "Team Canada" missions should more accurately reflect the demographic reality of Canada, including more women, aboriginal peoples and other minority groups.

It was also suggested that if we are seeking to improve human rights overseas the Canadian government must take a detailed look at its own domestic human rights record, especially with respect to Canada's aboriginal people. In order to be taken seriously, Canada's promotion of human rights abroad needs to be consistent with its activities in its own back yard.

In addition to the roles of business and government in promoting human rights, the role of individual Canadians was also briefly discussed. The need to educate and engage Canadians as individuals regarding their responsibilities towards human rights was felt to be important. This included their activities in business and as consumers.

Overall, it was felt that developing methods for human rights protection - whether they involve business, government or individuals should include a broad base of