



potential models. The overwhelming support for a consultative approach to peacebuilding based on a well developed and inclusive policy network that welcomes input from diverse sources, is indicative of how such a model may begin to take shape. This Forum was not an end in itself, but a means to open a larger discussion concerning the role that Canada will play in future peacebuilding initiatives, and how our response may be moulded to be more rapid, effective, and focused.



## Policy group Discussions

### Group 1: Civil Society - Discussion Summary

*What strengths do Canadians bring to the task of peacebuilding, in terms of our political values and institutional capabilities (both governmental and non-governmental).*

#### Strengths:

- a congruence between government and NGO attitudes and ability to work together in Canada;
- our universal social programs;
- a well-structured, stable country;
- inclusiveness important to Canadians (inclusion of minorities in policy development);
- consensus among Canadians that we have an international presence;
- international activities promote Canadian values and a "better world";
- humility - go in with an openness and willingness to listen and learn;
- population diverse (multicultural) in Canada - enriched assets to help develop policy, willingness to work in different ways;

- organization such as unions have a broader scope which includes a social focus;
- good communication channels within Canada, a lot of listening - necessary with the geographic size and diversity of the country;
- huge web of international contacts - trade unions, NGOs, twinned cities, missionaries, to help with early warning role;
- not seen as dominating like the United States; well-respected; "Canada is a friend".

#### Weaknesses:

- strong relationship with the United States could hinder international role - also being part of NATO - although it is felt that the differences inherent in Canada are well understood internationally;
- all of Canada's policies need to be congruent - foreign and domestic - increased trade and arms to Indonesia where a coup is quite possible was given as an example;
- concern about increased control by the media including ownership by Conrad Black and what that means for social policy issues, etc.

#### Additional discussion points:

- when speaking of civil society, there is a need to realize that in many countries there are relatively few institutions compared to those in Canada;
- the people in the country itself know what they want to build in their society; we need to listen to refugees;
- a big gap in our knowledge and experience - how to rebuild a society where the former ideology has collapsed as in former communist countries or where the church's stronger role has ended;