

## **2. Cross Cutting Issues**

During the course of the day certain cross cutting issues surfaced in the discussions - issues that are integral to both the formal summit processes and the informal processes being pursued by parliamentarians, civil society groups and others. Certain questions arose:

What are Canada's interests in democracy, the environment, and corruption?

- Which networks and processes should Canada support in order to build capacity of civil society and build state-to-state civil society relations?
- How can we strengthen information exchange in the hemisphere?
- How can space be created for more effective and inclusive participation?
- What role can Canada play in institutional development and how can institutions help monitor and review this capacity development?
- What lessons learned and what Canadian models could be shared and exported?
- How can models be activated and created which will be useful?

## **3. Context and Definitions**

As the group explored these questions, it was noted that many societies within the hemisphere have civil societies in place and long histories, some 200 years old, of communities working together on certain issues. Across the hemisphere there is great variety within institutions whether they be the church or the military. In some countries the military has gone from killing its citizens to protecting the environment and in Guatemala the military owns a bank. Some time was spent on defining civil society and the concept of human security. The group recognized definitions of civil society, human security, non-governmental organization mean different things to different societies throughout the hemisphere. We should be careful in how we define these terms. The wrong people - ie. the mafia and the drug trade - can be seen as part of civil society. Being sensitive to the historic role of the church, cultural traditions, NGOs and institutions, the complexities of definitions, and remaining conscious that those in the region look differently at these issues than through a western lens were important reminders.

## **4. Political Systems**

In order to introduce the discussion on governance and political systems, Nancy Taylor, Parliamentary Centre in Ottawa, began by defining the concept of human security and clarifying that the fulfilment of human security goals depends in large measure on the ability of governing systems to manage a state's affairs. Democratic governing systems were defined to include legislatures, legal and judicial systems, electoral and human rights bodies, regional and local governments, the private sector and civil society organizations. There are many actors in a governing system - the state playing a prominent role in how it maintains social harmony, security and order. The state's obligations include ensuring social, political and economic