



The tone of the discussion was informal, disagreements were handled with mutual respect, and participants demonstrated strong interest both in collecting as many viewpoints as possible and in generating insights which would be immediately useful to policy-makers. There were a number of unresolved disagreements among participants, with some arguing determinedly for reduced government regulation and pulling the discussion toward a call for increased government support to Canadian commercial enterprises, and others favouring renewed government activism in favour of democratic development, and pulling the discussion toward a focus on questions of social justice and international responsibility.

In spite of these protracted disagreements, a number of policy recommendations were agreed upon in all three of the working groups. In order to place these recommendations in context, readers are strongly encouraged to read the report in full. It is important to recognize that some participants had reservations or concerns about some of these recommendations, and that others argued for recommendations which go beyond those outlined out here.

The general recommendations common to all of the three working groups were:

- extend existing mechanisms for public input in foreign policy-making, and widen the circle of participants in consultative processes. Provide detailed feedback to participants, keep participants informed of subsequent consultations and decisions, and demonstrate intention to adopt recommendations in policy actions. Make use of the Internet to develop a supplementary stream of interactive consultation that would be more accessible, more direct, and less expensive;
- in efforts to promote the extension of communications infrastructures, both within Canada and in developing countries, be prepared to act in emergency situations but plan for the long term, draw on the expertise of Canadian NGOs, and be sensitive to local culture and values;
- integrate concern with communications issues into all future trade and development strategies/missions (some participants argued that these strategies/missions should be guided primarily by national commercial interests. Others felt that commercial interests should be subordinated to, or at least balanced against, the promotion of democracy, human rights, and sustainable development);
- enhance coordination among relevant government agencies in the design and implementation of communications policies (domestic and international). The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade must extend its coordination with Industry Canada and Heritage Canada in particular;
- maintain government financial support for Radio Canada International, and, wherever possible, extend support to similar programs in other communications media (ie. the Internet);
- devise new means of achieving national goals (ie. Canadian content, jobs, etc.), without extensive regulation or government expense, through creative partnership with industry, NGOs, and like-minded states. The Broadcasting Act, in particular, should be reviewed (with special attention to its potential application to new forms of media, like the Internet). The government must maintain access to a "public lane."