

## Roundtable with Civil Society

### Transcript of a Speech by the Honourable John Manley Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs

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Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am delighted to be here to participate in this further discussion.

As you have referred to, both the Minister for International Trade and I have had previous encounters with many of the people around this table. In addition to that, our officials have met many times — I think in total with 1000 representatives — in the months leading up to this important summit.

Many groups — in fact, I believe all of the groups around the table — have made important contributions to the work leading into the Summit. In fact, I have with me the book *The Civil Society Contribution to the Summit of the Americas*, which is a combination of the declarations and recommendations that have come in to us. This information was provided to the Summit, to the leaders of government that are participating in the Summit, and further information concerning the outcomes of various other summits including the Youth Summit, the Mayors, the Indigenous Peoples and the People's Summit have also been provided to them. So that input has already been transmitted.

The Minister for International Trade and I will be meeting with Prime Minister Chrétien following this discussion today so that we have an opportunity to brief him on what was discussed here and the information that we will be receiving.

I know he feels it is important to receive the information relating to the discussions here, and I am sure that in preparing the *Action Plan* there will be many things that will be represented in the submissions we have received so far.

I can tell you, for example, that there has been much discussion about the democracy clause. We consider it the crucial outcome of this summit. It was strongly supported over the course of many months by many organizations, many groups as diverse as the Carter Center, Participa of Chile, FOCAL of Canada, and many other groups.

We have seen the urging of Transparency International for the OAS Anti-Corruption Convention. Work will be evident on that. The indigenous leaders that met both in Guatemala City and in Ottawa urged action on education, on health, on corporate social responsibility.

I think you will see in the *Action Plan* responses to that as well as to so many groups that urged a strengthening of the human rights system throughout the Americas, promotion of gender equality, protection of cultural diversity.