

his hope that young Indigenous Peoples will be able to see the world in a brighter way than their predecessors. The first steps toward this goals have already been taken.

Marc Lortie, the Prime Ministers's personal representative for the Summit of Americas, outlined Canada's interests in the Hemisphere and brought participants up to date with planning for the upcoming OAS General Assembly meeting in Windsor (June 4, 2000) and the Quebec City Summit (April, 2000). During the 1998 Santiago Summit, Prime Minister Chretien signalled that Canada is ready to play its role in the Americas. A changing context allowed Canada to join the OAS ten years ago. Most Latin American countries have embarked on political and economic reforms aimed at developing democratic systems and free markets. The end of the Cold War and increased efforts to strengthen the European Union contributed to the shift in focus of Canadian foreign policy from Europe to the Americas. The time is right to develop networks and links with our neighbours to the South.

The Windsor OAS General Assembly meeting and the Quebec City Summit are good opportunities to promote Canada's vision. The OAS is re-orienting to become a more people-focussed body. It addresses range of issues including democratisation, social needs, as well as trade and investment. The Canadian agenda for the Quebec City Summit is still being shaped and the government is open to ideas and suggestions.

Attention should be paid to three key areas, which came out of the Santiago Summit. They are:

1. Strengthening democracy. How can Canada help to embed democratic values? How have democracies improved in the region since the last Summit?
2. Economic integration. How does the Hemisphere collectively stand on developing/moving forward the Free Trade Area of the Americas? How to integrate the human/social dimension into trade and investment negotiations and deals?
3. Social dimension. Has access to social services, including health and education improved for all? How has the reform of the justice system progressed? Have human (and other) rights been strengthened? How can Canada play a useful role?

Marc Lortie encouraged reflection on these issues. He said that Canada could perhaps offer its experience with community building. He was receptive to practical and concrete suggestions from the roundtable participants and reiterated the opportunity Canada has to play a leadership role in the Americas.

Before the discussion began, Paul Chartrand outlined his paper. He extended his appreciation for creating a forum which includes Indigenous Peoples, NGOs, government officials and especially the business community. He commented on the significance of the Red River region as the homeland of several Indigenous Peoples and a place key in the development of Canada.