

## **Executive Summary**

Participants in this year's Group of 78 Policy Conference carried out a critical review of the ways in which Canada's commitment to world peace has broadened over the past decade. The concepts of human security and soft power have found expression in policies and programs; women have achieved a more prominent role in policy making. At the same time, Canada has fallen far short of its professed goals in foreign aid. Conference participants offered many suggestions for strengthening Canada's commitment to world peace in the years to come.

### **Keynote speech**

**Dr. Mary-Wynne Ashford** looked for the attributes of a culture of peace in communities that have refused either to fight or submit to tyranny. In recent times, the lessons of Gandhi's non-violent campaign against British rule in India have been applied in the Philippines. There, the Church urged the people into the streets to prevent the army from acting on the orders of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos; the people took to the streets and stayed there. Marcos fled. Even under the new regime, areas of civil war continued but were restrained when peasant communities persuaded the army on one side, guerillas on the other, to respect Zones of Peace. The same method was taken to Colombia where, despite terrible setbacks, some 28 Zones of Peace persist. Dr. Ashford also gave examples of clinging to peace in the midst of war from the Tibetan exile community in India, the Kosevo Hospital in Sarajevo and nonviolent communities bringing together Israelis and Palestinians.

Representatives of fifty award-winning communities brought together by the United Nations put their fingers on the keys to success: such attributes as altruism, a sense of human dignity and worth, pride in doing things for themselves. The communities described their codes of decency, equality, and respect for life and the individual, and their rejection of raw power, threats, and greed. Most stressed spiritual strength and religious or cultural traditions as sources of resilience, perseverance and hope. Other aspects were respect for nature, a common vision of social justice, community ownership of programs, participation, and shared power. A legitimate economic base was essential to long-term success.

What can outsiders do? Dr. Ashford said a demonstration of concern gives those working for reform a sense of solidarity to dispel feelings of hopelessness. Outside help can support educational programs in moral values and participatory democracy. It can also support the necessary structures of Zones of Peace, including a justice system, and contribute to communications needs.

### **The Politics of a Culture of Peace**

**Senator Douglas Roche** took as his theme the 20-year policy thrust of the Group of 78 as contrasted with the new militarist and anti-internationalist foreign policy of the Canadian Alliance party. He noted that the kind of policies put forward by the G78 in 1981 – to eliminate nuclear