

II. PERCEPTIONS REGARDING NATIONAL ATTRIBUTES

At the beginning of each focus group, participants were asked to identify those things about Canada which distinguished it from other countries. In each group, a list of five to ten or more attributes was compiled.

The most frequently cited attributes had to do with Canada's physical resources. Its enormous geographic size, the diversity of landscape, and enormously abundant national resources were all mentioned on numerous occasions. The country's bilingual and multi-cultural nature also came to mind for a considerable number of participants. Canada was considered to be a compassionate country by most participants, the majority citing our aid programs to underdeveloped countries.

Our proximity to and friendly relations with the United States was another factor which many people volunteered made Canada somewhat unique. The discussion around this point tended to suggest that while it made Canada different from countries outside North America, in some ways, the strong American cultural influence made us somewhat similar to the United States.

Participants were somewhat divided on the question of whether Canada can be called an advanced industrial society. Many held the view that the country was not progressing adequately in this regard. The consensus about our current position appeared to be that while we are quite advanced in comparison with underdeveloped and developing countries, we do not compare that favourably with the Americans, Japanese, or some of the Western European countries.