

## 2. Canadian Interests and History

**Ronald Fisher**, Royal Roads University, drew attention to the CIIPS work. In particular, he pointed to the projects up to December 1990 in Ottawa and follow-up projects to facilitate peacebuilding in London, United Kingdom (June 1991). They included: a bi-communal art exhibit, business exchanges, and the creation of a bi-communal steering committee for further interchange. Notwithstanding that CIIPS and 40 other government funded agencies were closed in 1992, more workshops continued in 1993 with Canadian government funding assistance. In 1993 a decision was made to widen the field to include education and the role of education in maintaining the conflict. Teachers and children were brought together to look at education's potential role in conflict resolution. The CIIPS work then passed to the Americans who continued the bi-communal activities.

More recently American institutions (the Conflict Management Group, World Peace Foundation, and the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy) looked at obstacles to negotiations, including four meetings off the island. Before the Green Line closed in December 1997, the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre held a workshop in Cornwallis, Nova Scotia (November 9-13, 1997). Fisher concluded by saying that the CIIPS work has paved the way for future Canadian initiatives which would be favourably looked upon on the island. He noted that a continuing interest by Canadians is seen as a hopeful sign.

**Robert Hage**, Director, Southern Europe Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, pointed out that Canadian peacekeepers arrived on the island just after the British. The twenty-nine years of peacekeeping served three long-term Canadian foreign policy interests:

- Canada's membership in NATO and concerns over the tension between Turkey and Greece – both NATO partners,
- Canada's middle power commitment to peacekeeping in the context of the Cold War,
- Canada's common membership with Cyprus in the Commonwealth.

He noted then External Affairs Minister, Allan MacEachen, had stated in 1975 that as a major contributor to peacekeeping, Canada had sought to avoid taking sides on aspects of the dispute but had tried to encourage meaningful negotiations. There was little Canada could and can do on its own and had therefore sought to work with others. He reminded the participants of the 1978 ABC plan which addressed the Constitution, Territory and Development Assistance. However, lacking support from within the Cypriot community, this outside plan failed. Today, besides the traditional guarantor-powers (i.e., Great Britain, Greece and Turkey), the EU and the U.S. are also playing a leading role. In 1992-1993 Canada decided to withdraw from the island after almost three decades of peacekeeping. In 1997, Minister Axworthy appointed Michael Bell as a Special Envoy to Cyprus and visited the island himself in 1998. Hage expressed disappointment that no real solutions to the conflict have been found despite these Canadian and other multilateral efforts.