



To include representatives from various sectors of society would increase the possibility of a more rounded response in which a number of diverse concerns could be addressed, and an environment of information sharing could be fostered. An elaborate infrastructure would also enable volunteers to access much needed support while working in the field. Improved ties between Canadian NGOs and indigenous organizations must also be encouraged in order to fully realize the potential for cross-cultural partnerships in the rebuilding process.

Suggestions to aid in this transition included an inventory of skills or a "Resource Reserve" which would include lists of people with skills, knowledge, and experience that would be available to peacebuilding organizations for utilization in conflict or post-conflict situations. This would help to increase the rapidity, coherence, and effectiveness of a Canadian response to an international crisis. Emphasis was also placed on the importance of the dissemination of information to the wider public through the use of technology.

A suggestion was made to develop a policy website so that interested citizens could be more aware of Canadian international policy initiatives. Including the general public in the larger policy network would allow decision-makers to gauge public support for various initiatives, and would help to create an environment in which peacebuilding would be viewed as an open, consultative process in which many Canadians can participate.

Closely connected with this concept of lateral linkages was the consensus on the need for collaboration, flexibility, and the devolution of authority in peacebuilding initiatives from the federal government to peacebuilding organizations in partnership with grassroots organizations within the rebuilding state, and

various private interests. Instead of individual NGOs providing specific programs, a collaborative network must be established in which NGOs can work together to provide necessary services.

This would enhance effectiveness, and aid in the efficient use of scarce resources. Increased flexibility, and less rigid authority structures would allow peacebuilding organizations more freedom to aid in the reconstruction process, particularly in countries in which they have a long tradition of support, and established grassroots connections. Not enough flexibility in allowable response can slow down the process of civil reconstruction and institution-building.

Consensus between the groups was reached on the importance of long-term commitment to peacebuilding initiatives. Intervention must take place over an extended period of time, and to expect that 24 - 36 months will provide the basis for lasting solutions to deep-seated problems, is not realistic.

The final overarching theme was an emphasis on democratization as the primary goal of Canadian peacebuilding initiatives. At the centre of this lies the importance of the reconstruction of civil society as a means of fostering indigenous democratic movements. Civil society is the fabric which holds a community together, and the strengthening of the social economic spheres can create a political space in which civil organizations can work with the government to develop a democratic state that reflects their own values and history.

Conclusion

While only one of the three discussion groups produced a model for a Canadian peacebuilding mechanism, this Forum helped to establish the parameters for any ensuing discussions of