



developing countries be sensitive to the cultural values of those societies, to preferred media in those societies (ie. print vs. radio), and to the extensive networks already established in those societies by NGOs.

Participants also agreed that Canada should support reasonable "safeguards" on offensive content, with particular concern expressed about hate literature, sexual exploitation of children, and electronically-communicated crime. Participants felt that, since national regulation has proven relatively costly and ineffective, Canada should lead in the development of international safeguards where appropriate.

Finally, the group's participants expressed interest in the integration of this Forum series with other public consultation programs and in an extension of inter-agency coordination on communications issues. Participants wanted to learn more about the mechanics of the Forum, to be kept informed about the findings of the National Forum, to receive feedback from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and to see evidence that insights and recommendations generated in the Forum were finding expression in government policy.

Several participants argued for the inclusion of representatives from Industry Canada and Heritage Canada in future consultations, for feedback from these agencies on the findings of the Forum series, and for enhanced coordination among all relevant government agencies in the design and implementation of Canada's communications policies.

Reflecting on Ms. Medina's remarks in the opening plenary, the group observed that an international information/communications strategy must involve not only an industry structure and regulatory aspect, but also consideration of "content"--the messages about

itself that Canada should convey to the rest of the world. Some participants thought in terms of some sort of institutionalized process to determine which guiding principles ("values") would be highlighted in such a strategy. Others clearly preferred a more "bottom-up" process.

There was general agreement that Canadians should be given the fullest possible opportunity to share with each other their experiences, values and views of the world, through all sorts of communications media, since the messages we want the world to hear will undoubtedly be built on what we say to each other. The question of access within Canadian society is therefore considered integral to Canada's international relations in the communications sphere.

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## Executive Summary

Both the Steering Committee and the invited participants were disappointed with the lack of guidance from the Forum's government sponsors, and there was a sense that government policies and concerns in this area either remained unformed or had not been made sufficiently clear (the Steering Committee had requested an inventory of Canadian communications policies and concerns from DFAIT, but only the six-page discussion paper was made available. There were few references to this paper within the working groups).

Participants were eager to share their views on communications issues, but many were clearly uncertain about which questions were to be reviewed and to what ends. Other participants showed keen interest in particular facets of the broader communications area, and were interested in drawing attention and support to their own projects. Once concrete issues or policy options had been raised, the discussions became more animated and productive.