

REPORT FROM THE HALIFAX ROUNDTABLE: **DEMOCRATISATION IN THE AMERICAS**

July 9, 1999
Halifax

On July 9, 1999, the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development, with the Centre for Foreign Policy Studies at Dalhousie University, organised a one-day roundtable in Halifax on "Democratisation in the Americas." Experts on democracy-related issues as well as some NGOs, including Amnesty International and Development and Peace, met to address opportunities and challenges for democratisation in Latin America and to offer ideas for Canadian policy options. The meeting was a continuation of a public discussion begun in Calgary (March 17, 1999). That meeting included a wider variety of NGO, labour and business representatives as well as academics and students. It was aimed at identifying the broad issues that the participants felt deserve attention of Canadian policy makers. Promoting democracy in the Americas surfaced as one of the key policy issues and one of the prerequisites to the success of other objectives. The Halifax meeting was a response to that recommendation.

1. Starting the Discussion

The welcome was extended by **Tim Shaw**, the Director of the Centre for Foreign Policy Studies at Dalhousie University. He mentioned the continuing relationship between his Centre and the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development. According to him, the development of Canadian foreign policy is becoming more interesting as new actors, traditionally excluded, are getting involved in the process. There has been a surge in community level involvement in recent years on a variety of issues. The network of bodies aimed at engaging the public in foreign policy development seems to be growing internationally as the establishment of the Foreign Policy Centre in Great Britain shows.

Following Tim Shaw's remarks, Marketa Geisler from the **Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development (CCFPD)** welcomed everybody on behalf of Steven Lee, the National Director of the Centre. She reminded the participants that the Centre's mandate is to help Canadians outside of government contribute to the development of Canada's foreign policy. This roundtable in particular was aimed at generating policy options on promoting democracy in the Americas. It is a part of a two year process of Canadian foreign policy development in the Hemisphere, leading up to the 3rd Summit of the Americas (Quebec City, 2001). It is also a continuation of a public discussion started in Calgary in March (March 17, 1999). The CCFPD's