



## What Canadians say about

# North Korea **AND** UN peace operations

Recent discussions held under the aegis of the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development (CCFPD) examined two highly topical issues:

- What happens now that Canada has formal ties with North Korea?
- How do we provide the wide range of experts needed for UN peace operations today?

### Into the hermit kingdom

Until recently, North Korea was virtually sealed off from the outside world. With the collapse of the country's economy, however, and the famine that has taken 3 million lives since 1995, the Pyongyang regime has been forced to open up its borders and seek assistance for rebuilding.

Canada was one of the states that decided to take up the challenge and establish diplomatic relations with North Korea. But this step raises several questions: How do we develop public and business partnerships in the context of a tightly controlled society and economy? How can we help alleviate hardship in North Korea? How can we contribute to longer-term development? What does the North Korean government expect from formalizing its relationship with Canada?

To investigate some of these questions, in January CCFPD organized a one-day roundtable in Victoria, B.C. Sharing their expertise and views were representatives of NGOs and churches, academics, businesspeople, and government officials. The participants included Paul Evans of the University of British Columbia, Erich Weingartner of CanKor.net, Rev. Alfred Lee of the Korean Presbyterian Church, Charles Kim of Trans-Pac Fibre Inc., Bohdana Dutka of CIDA and David McLellan of DFAIT. The business representatives expressed caution about operating in North Korea without a solid legal framework and basic infrastructure. The roundtable made several recommendations:

- Offer humanitarian assistance in the short term to lessen critical food shortages.
- Expand the presence of Canadian NGOs inside North Korea.
- Initiate regular academic exchanges and training programs.
- Conduct bilateral exchanges at the government level.
- Establish business contacts.

photos: DFAIT

### Experts for peace operations

Canadians are participating in international peace operations that have a role for many non-government partners and require a wide range of professional expertise. CCFPD discussions have looked at ways to better include experts in child protection, public administration and the justice system. Among the participants: Justice Ellen Macdonald of the Ontario Superior Court, Paul Larose-Edwards of the Canadian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights, Marianne Wightman of the UN Mission in Kosovo, and Susan Brown of CIDA.

As an outcome of the discussion, CCFPD is proposing a larger role for active or retired municipal administrators, business executives, judges and the legal community. Recommendations include the following:

- Re-assess the age limit imposed by the UN for participants in peace support operations.
- Rather than simply monitoring elections, Canada should facilitate power-sharing negotiations between opposing parties that compete for votes.
- Develop rosters, manage volunteers at home, establish ground rules for participants and provide pre-deployment training.
- DFAIT should do more to help open doors for civilians abroad. ●—

For more information about the Centre's roundtables or for copies of reports on a variety of subjects, e-mail the CCFPD at [info.ccfpd@dfait-maeci.gc.ca](mailto:info.ccfpd@dfait-maeci.gc.ca) or contact Chantale Walker, Communications and Media Relations Officer ([chantale.walker@dfait-maeci.gc.ca](mailto:chantale.walker@dfait-maeci.gc.ca)). Visit as well the Centre's Web site: <http://www.cfp-pec.gc.ca>

