

INSTITUTIONALIZING THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

In implementing Summit of the Americas mandates, it is the Government's intention to maintain the momentum created among non-governmental groups, including the private sector, by the Summit process. The Government recognizes the importance of developing links among groups from various sectors. These links facilitate access to and exchange of information; avoid duplication of work and studies; permit non-governmental actors to benefit from pre-existing research instruments and studies, thus furthering expertise on specific subjects; contribute to the development of new ideas and the refinement of existing approaches; and enhance the credibility of the process and the visibility of constructive citizens' groups. Accordingly, the Government will:

- ♦ continue to work to ensure that civil society consultative practices are reinforced within the FTAA Committee of Government Representatives on the Participation of Civil Society, the CEGCI and other inter-American bodies;
- ♦ strengthen the mechanisms by which the comments received throughout the Summit process are taken into consideration and by which feedback is provided; and
- ♦ continue to support the development of both established and new networks, promoting multi-sectoral links and thereby enhancing the ability of groups from all sectors of society to contribute effectively to the development of proposals on issues of concern to citizens of the Americas.

STRENGTHENING RELATIONS WITH PROVINCIAL/ TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENTS AND OTHER LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

The Government recognizes the importance and value of consultation with provincial and territorial governments. Their input is essential to the development of appropriate strategies to fulfil Summit mandates. Furthermore, the *Plan of Action* outlines the importance of local governments, particularly the role that municipalities can play in facilitating the participation of citizens in politics and policy development. Accordingly, the Government will:

- ♦ continue to consult with provincial and territorial governments in developing Canada's contribution to the hemispheric cooperation process; and
- ♦ explore ways to increase opportunities for local governments and municipalities to further engage in the Summit process.

