

**Recommendation:** As a matter of urgency, and with direct and continuing ministerial attention, senior managers of DFAIT should affirm the principle of public participation and operationalize the principle in the routines of the department. It is not now clear, either to NGOs or to officers in the department, that acting on this principle is a genuine departmental priority.

**Recommendation:** At the outset of every exercise in public consultation, members of DFAIT and members of the public should strive to agree on shared objectives—or at least to articulate their different objectives and expectations explicitly. Goal definition can speed the process, diminish misunderstanding and prevent disappointment.

#### Vancouver and Santiago: progress and discontent

The documentary record and participants in later accounts all agree that DFAIT's public consultations for the Vancouver and Santiago summits disappointed almost everybody—ministers, officials and the NGO community. Ministers are widely credited with showing (eventually) a real readiness to engage NGOs in discussion. For many in the NGOs, however, the department's institutional commitment to consultation was and remains episodic, superficial and inconclusive. Officials, for their part, (particularly those who had hoped for better) generally judge NGO contributions to policy as shallow and impractical. All sides agree that documentary information supplied by DFAIT to NGOs and others in the consultations was late and insufficient. As one result, policy recommendations that NGOs pressed on the department were too often uninformed or disconnected from the course of the negotiations.