

Environmental Concerns

Participants felt that Canada should consider environmental concerns as basic to the development of foreign policy, and should strive to:

deal on our behalf with the countries where the contaminants originate;

ask other countries to suspend use of contaminants;

ensure that money is set aside for reclamation when relevant.

Exchanges of People and Ideas

Participants discussing exchanges expressed awareness that the circumpolar world shares many concerns, priorities, advantages and disadvantages. Various comments were made about the advantages of exchanging visits and ideas with other circumpolar communities. Student, trade, sports exchanges: all have value and are positive learning experience for all participants.

Among the advantages are strengthened northern ties, voice, and cooperation. In addition, exchanges help show similarities, and result in substantial exchanges of information and ideas. And, as one participant mentioned, it is good also to know of situations in which conditions are worse, as in Russia; such knowledge gives perspective.

Participants agreed that international circumpolar exchanges for Inuit/Northern peoples should be a priority, and that barriers to such activities should be reduced. One suggestion was that circumpolar passport requirements, particularly for Inuit, should be dropped. Immigration requirements impede travel among families who are separated by barriers (borders) perceived as artificial and sometimes not accepted. Immigration requirements also impede skill exchanges through such things as teacher exchanges, because of barriers to temporary employment in Canada.

Intellectual Property

One group explored the concept of intellectual property extensively, and agreed that it presents a problem. They felt that cooperation is needed at both national and international levels to ensure that credit is given to Inuit throughout the circumpolar world for their intellectual property-- traditional knowledge, the qayaq, the ullu, etc. In the past, credit, whether financial or simply recognition, has not been given. This group felt that the issue is of ongoing concern, and that Canada can assume a leadership role in preventing the area of intellectual property.