



Youth forum on Native land

Rebeka Tabobondung, a board member of Co-Development Canada, then welcomed delegates to the conference by acknowledging the forum was held on First Nations land. "The first thing I would like to do is acknowledge that we are in Coast Salish Territory," said Tabobondung, who offered thanks to the Burrard and Squamish bands "for allowing us to be here."

"CoDev strongly believes that we cannot separate ourselves with what is happening in other parts of the world," said Tabobondung in her address. "APEC effects all of us. We are overjoyed and honoured to be working with youth from the Asia Pacific and throughout Canada in this unique forum."

Tabobondung, 21, is a First Nations youth, Ojibwa from Wasauksiing First Nation. She is studying peace and conflict studies at Vancouver's Langara College.

Svend Robinson gives opening address

Federal Member of Parliament Svend Robinson was the youth forum's first guest speaker. In her welcome to Robinson, Rebeka Tabobondung acknowledged Robinson's long activist history, from his days as the first student elected to the University of British Columbia Board of Governors, to his more recent stint at a provincial jail for his part in protesting logging in B.C.'s Clayoquot Sound. "He believes in taking political leadership beyond parliament," noted Tabobondung.

"Today you are a part of history," Robinson told the youth delegates, thanking them for allowing him to be a part of the forum.

Robinson's address touched on a vast range of human rights, labour, and environmental issues across the Asia Pacific and around the world. Robinson, who was forced to leave an official visit to China for speaking out on human rights abuses, called Canada's stance "shamefully silent" on many international abuses, and continued to call for the Canadian government to take a stronger stand on countries with histories of human rights abuses. Robinson condemned the federal government for breaking its own laws by allowing Indonesian president Soeharto to enter Canada for the APEC meetings.

If Canada put human rights, the environment, workers rights, at the centre of what we were doing, it would

benefit everyone, Robinson said.

"Understand the power that you have," Robinson told the youth delegates in closing. "If you look at the course of history, it has been changed many times by people like you." Robinson cited Nelson Mandela — "27 years in prison and now the leader of South Africa" — to applause from the delegates.

In a question period following his address, Robinson suggested meeting with Canadian MPs as a way youth can take action on issues. But one delegate pointed out that contacting his MP over the Gustafsen Lake standoffs had yielded nothing. Robinson answered by stressing the importance of the youth vote in shaping Canadian politics.

What's up with the People's Summit?

The launch of the Youth Forum marks the official opening of the 1997 People's Summit on APEC. The next summit event will occur when the Women's Conference Against APEC takes place November 17 to 18. The opening ceremonies for the People's Summit will take place November 19, with forums such as poverty, public education, sustainability, labour and the arms trade, running through to November 24. To register for the People's Summit on APEC, contact the Secretariat at The 1997 People's Summit on APEC, 910 - 207 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, B.C., Canada V6B 1H7, tel: (604) 682-1952, fax: (604) 682-1931, e-mail: popsum97@bc.sympatico.ca

What's up with the Daily Communiqué?

The 1997 People's Summit on APEC will produce daily communiqués on the proceedings of the various events at the summit. It appears as a printed version for delegates on-site, and allows people from around the world to follow the summit on the Internet — www.vcn.bc.ca/summit. Those with net access can also visit the youth forum website at www.islandnet.com/vglobe/codev/codev1.html

The communiqué is written by forum participants and volunteer reporters, and material is not vetted by the People's Summit for content, so the perspectives expressed remain those of the writers.

