



Indigenous Peoples



Participants who addressed the role of Indigenous Peoples discussed how Canadians could help Indigenous Peoples find a voice and play an active role in Canada and in Asia-Pacific. They discussed whether the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples was an appropriate or credible foreign policy objective.

Participants agreed that Indigenous Peoples can and need to speak for themselves and should be provided with the “voice space” to do so. This applies to Indigenous Peoples in Canada and Asia-Pacific, recognizing that the situation in Asia-Pacific is complicated by minority, tribal and other communal considerations. Participants acknowledged however that Indigenous Peoples continue to pursue North - South and Canada - Asia-Pacific links, dialogues and activities.

Participants suggested that Indigenous Peoples are adversely affected by non-sustainable economic development such as resource extraction. They pointed out that those Indigenous Peoples that conduct business do so within their models for sustainable development which should be acknowledged as they are effective and have a lot to offer. They agreed that to-date in the area of health, there is some recognition of the sciences and knowledge of Indigenous and Asian Peoples.

It was suggested that the UN “individual” rights framework is being challenged by some Asian and Indigenous Peoples. Participants agreed that Canada has in its Indigenous Peoples an untapped resource that may help engage Asia-Pacific nations in human rights discussions.

Participants suggested that although Canada has the benefit of diversity in ideas, geography and ethnicity, there has to be a recognition that most human rights violations are directed at Indigenous Peoples here and in Asia-Pacific.

Policy Options

1. *Canada should within APEC:*
 - (a) *promote and broaden civil society participation in APEC meetings, especially greater participation of Indigenous Peoples;*
 - (b) *promote a forum on Indigenous Peoples issues.*
2. *Canada should promote “participatory” research on Indigenous Peoples, that is, conduct research with the participation of Indigenous Peoples. Canada should also pursue shared learning regarding health in particular through cooperative measures.*