

aid to Latin America is less than one percent of current levels of Canadian foreign direct investment in Latin American mining and logging.

An explicit policy on the regional dimension of indigenous rights and development would advance Canada's credibility, and its leadership in the fields of human rights and democratic governance. It would not only be consistent with Canada's national interest in increasing trade with its hemispheric neighbours, but provide significant opportunities for Canada's Aboriginal peoples to forge a stake in hemispheric trade, growth and development by participating in research, policy-making and implementation.

A Canadian policy on indigenous peoples of the Americas would, at a minimum, make clear commitments to:

- the speedy ratification of ILO Convention No. 169;

- the adoption of a screening mechanism governing DFAIT's participation in the promotion of Canadian investments abroad;

- the establishment of an effective regional monitoring system and annual Parliamentary reports through collaboration with indigenous-peoples' networks

- a serious investment in educational partnerships involving indigenous organizations and institutions in Canada and Latin America.

These threshold measures should gradually be reinforced by appropriate legislation to strengthen corporate overseas accountability under law.

An appropriate opportunity to launch a Canadian initiative would be the Day of Indigenous People scheduled for the upcoming 8th session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (April 24-May 5) at New York.