

Domestic law and policies reinforce the marginalisation of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, he said. Ever since their land and resources have been dispossessed, Indigenous Peoples have been living on the margins of the Canadian economy. Indigenous Peoples issues have often been an afterthought, an addition to decisions already made. Canadian law has consistently ignored the interests of Indigenous Peoples and, in some cases, has prevented them from taking full advantage of their talents and resources. They have been considered as people without a voice and history.

Today, governments have become more sensitive to human rights. Other changes have also occurred, including the expansion of free markets. As a result, businesses have become increasingly influential. It remains critical to Canadians and the Canadian government how money and corporate power is used. Canada should be the champion of mutually beneficial trade. "The most significant contribution that Canada can make to the security and development of Indigenous Peoples is to manage Canadian investments in a way that ensures a positive net impact on the indigenous communities which host Canadian resource companies." There has been some indication that the private sector is increasingly aware of the need to recognise Indigenous Peoples rights.

First steps toward developing a Canadian policy on Indigenous Peoples in the Americas should make clear commitments to:

1. The speedy ratification of ILO Convention No.169.
2. The adoption of a screening mechanism governing DFAIT's participation in the promotion of Canadian investments abroad.
3. The establishment of an effective regional monitoring system and annual Parliamentary reports through collaboration with Indigenous People's network.
4. A serious investment in educational partnerships involving indigenous organisations and institutions in Canada and Latin America.

These thresh-hold measures should gradually be reinforced by appropriate legislation to strengthen corporate overseas accountability under law, Paul Chartrand said. Participation of Indigenous Peoples in devising policies that affect them is fundamental.

2. Synopsis of the Discussion

Phil Fontaine, emphasised the point made by Paul Chartrand that historical texts, including encyclopaedia, treat Indigenous Peoples in a vague way as if they were a nameless and faceless mass. As a result Canadians are not fully exposed to the history of Canada and many have no knowledge and understanding of Indigenous Peoples. This poses challenges for building relationships and, in extension, for doing business. Representatives of Indigenous Peoples from the United States expressed their support for Phil Fontaine's efforts to develop better links among the Indigenous Peoples of the Hemisphere. They also expressed their appreciation for the