



Asia-Pacific policy ideas on sustainable development, human rights, Indigenous Peoples, and free media, and recommends:

- greater involvement of Indigenous Peoples in Asia-Pacific affairs (looking at the Arctic Council as a model);
- Canadian leadership in creating networks and informal associations in Asia to promote a cleaner environment, human rights, arms control and free information and media;
- stronger links between Canadian civil society (professional groups, youth, Native Peoples, NGOs, academics) and their counterparts in Asia;
- industry awards for clean technology exporters to Asia;
- help to local journalists and community-based media in Asia as well as more Radio Canada International programming in Asia;
- a bigger role for the Canadian Navy, Coast Guard and Search and Rescue services in Asia-Pacific to promote regional cooperation and confidence-building.

The Report reflects a broad and strong set of values across Canada. At a time when some argue that "Canada is not a country", divided by various fractures, the Report shows a common Canadian world view based on tolerance, cultural sensitivity, support for ethical business practices, commitment to human rights and environmental protection and a keen interest in a greater role for citizens in policy-making and in international affairs. The Quebec Report concludes "participants reiterated the Victoria Forum recommendations" on press and human rights.

And, the National Forum represents a new kind of dialogue between citizens and government. Sponsored and organized by the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development and local hosts, the National Forum is the kind of policy development discussion that can be useful to both policy-makers and interested citizens. For policy makers, these discussions encourage ideas and recommendations from outside government. For the public, these discussions encourage thinking through policy issues, dilemmas and trade-offs, and thinking together, rather than talking "at" government. The goal is to move beyond frustrating, traditional government "consultations" to a meaningful role for citizens in creating policy options and ideas.

The National Forum Report endorses this new approach and notes, "The Forum is not a singular event, but part of a larger foreign policy process that places considerable value on citizen input and further develops the multi-sector foreign policy network in Canada."

On November 6, 1997, the Report was tabled in the House of Commons and the Senate, confirming Minister Axworthy's on-going commitment to civil society input in the development of Canada's foreign policy. The Report and preparatory roundtable reports are available on the Centre Web Site or on request to anyone interested in Asia-Pacific relations, APEC, the APEC People's Summit and the evolving role of citizens in foreign policy making. Reports from the meetings in Victoria, Waterloo, Halifax and Quebec are also available.

Steven Lee  
National Director