



- Copies of National Forum reports should be distributed to Canadian consulates and embassies around the world, as well as foreign embassies and consulates in Canada. Responses from the foreign service officers at home and abroad could be brought back for consideration at the next National Forum.

## Report to plenary from the three focus groups

### Confidence-Building, Group 1

Initially, the group discussed a pervasive concern regarding the seriousness of the Canadian government in its stated interest in the outcome and influence of public fora such as this one on the policy-making process.

Like Group #2, this group determined that to tie the term "confidence-building" to a set definition would only serve to limit the flexible nature which is inherent in this concept.

It was further agreed that, unlike "intervention" and "reconstruction", confidence-building is not step one in a three-step process. Rather, it is integral to intervention, resolution, reconstruction and so forth. It is as complex as diplomatic negotiations at the highest level, and at the same time as simple as "track two" (informal) diplomacy and friendship. The trust, or confidence, which exists between nations must be continually worked at and is very tenuous.

Generally, the group's conversation focused on the non-military actors in the peacebuilding process, such as NGOs. It was decided that Canada's multicultural background makes it a nation with a potential to be adept at the confidence or

trust-building process. Like Group #2, Group #1 felt that government policy in all stages of peacebuilding should reflect Canadian values.

The recommendations which follow are based on the premise of limited resources on the part of the Canadian government and the need to develop long-term, sustainable, and therefore realistic goals and contributions to the international peace process.

### Recommendations

1. The Canadian government must turn to, and support international networks which have been established by NGOs and other interested parties. The Government does not need to start from scratch when developing future policies, but can build on the work and strategies which already exist within these networks.
2. Parties in conflict must be involved in the peace process from the very beginning and must be key players in this process. This should not just occur on the policy or military level, but through the use of the above stated networks, and through civil society as well.
3. When analyzing the limited resources available, the Government must look at the effects which its previous cuts in funding to NGOs, international programmes and peacekeeping, have had on the international order.
4. It was suggested that the Government produce a "confidence-building manual", using an existing military manual as a basis to build upon. Such a handbook, written in very plain language, explaining the basic principles of Canadian confidence-building and the Government's policies and recommendations on confidence-building, at all levels, should take shape, should be of great value in the coordination of NGO and government policy actions.