



Policy Development Update

May 1997

We should use Canada's technical expertise and financial resources to assist in the development of communications infrastructures in peacebuilding and humanitarian assistance, while recognizing that infrastructure is more than technology and must include long-term technical support.

We should build on Canada's successes and extend projects such as SchoolNet, Community Access, delivery of technology-enabled training (education and healthcare) and electronic distribution on an international level. (Toronto)

- establish an English language equivalent to the TV5 French language broadcast service;
 - establish media and cultural alliances with like-minded states (France and Australia as examples). (Toronto)
3. There was some support for the suggestion that, as part of Canada's commitment to the rapid-reaction capability of the UN, the Canadian military would develop the capacity to deploy communication units for civilian use during and following UN missions. These units would use a range of communications technologies to support free elections, media monitoring and good governance. (Toronto)
 4. There was some support for the concept of forming an international legal aid organization modeled on "Doctors without Borders" to give advice on using communications technologies in the creation and maintenance of democratic systems of government, the rule of law, judicial reform and other components of Canadian peacebuilding efforts. (Edmonton)

Mechanisms

1. There is a need to increase Canadian awareness of international affairs. In order to do this, the Government should create international education exchanges, promote revised school curricula, make greater use of NGOs and encourage more media coverage of international affairs. (Edmonton)
2. Many participants were concerned with the danger that Canadian culture might be swamped by other countries and agreed that this could be at least partially countered at the global level. Recommendations to extend the production and distribution of Canadian cultural products abroad included:
 - maintaining government financial support for Radio Canada International and, wherever possible, extend support to similar programs in other communication media (e.g. the Internet); (Toronto)
 - establish an international institute for Canadian culture and communications similar to the Association for Progressive Communication in South Africa;

Regulation

1. The Broadcasting Act needs to be reviewed and should not apply to the Internet. We need new ways to nurture demand for cultural industries and new ways to protect intellectual property. At the same time we need to continue to ensure access to a "public lane". (Toronto)
2. Canadian foreign ownership restrictions impede competitiveness and challenge our ability to promote Canadian cultural and economic objectives. Canada needs to review its restrictions and develop new mechanisms to achieve objectives related to research and production partnerships. (Toronto)