

SUMMARY OF ROUNDTABLE PROCEEDINGS

Welcome and Introduction

Shauna Sylvester welcomed participants on behalf of IMPAC and drew attention to the link between the roundtable and the international symposium on the media in APEC to be held on Nov. 19, 1997. She highlighted the role of open media as an aspect of freedom of expression and human rights, and encouraged wide-ranging debate and discussion among participants.

Bill Saunders welcomed participants on behalf of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers union, the largest media union in Canada with over 18,000 members. Mr. Saunders stressed the importance of using the APEC summit to focus attention on the relationship between human rights and world trade. He pointed out that the People's Summit on APEC would consist of as many as 16 "issues forums," including one on the media. He introduced the moderator, Tim Draimin.

Tim Draimin provided an overview of the process for the day's discussion. He then invited participants to introduce themselves and outline their expectations for the roundtable.

Morning Presentations:

Dr. Vincent Yang,
International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy
Former editor, Democracy and Law

Dr. Yang began by pointing out that "freer and more open media" did not necessarily mean independent media. He said that the Chinese government wanted to create a climate of law that would ensure a secure climate for foreign investment. A "gradual evolution" was taking place in the Chinese legal system, he said, and a similar evolution was taking place in the press, and that freer and more open media are being driven by economic reform. Until the early 1980s, the government controlled all agents of the press. Now there are commercial papers. His own journal, Democracy and Law, was launched with the support of a government loan. Dr. Yang stressed that there is a link between economic freedom and independence of the press. Trade and market liberalization, he argued, introduces the idea of fairness, equality, rights and freedoms. But trade and market liberalization are not the only factors leading to the freedom of the press. The political will of the government is also necessary. In 1990 the government introduced a statute on newspaper regulations, Section 7 of which defined the functions of newspapers as:

- 1) Education
- 2) Providing information and knowledge to the people
- 3) Entertainment