

Transcript of a Speech by the Honourable Maria Minna Canadian Minister for International Co-operation

Mr. Chairman, I know we are running out of time. I will be exactly one half a minute.

I simply want to say that we have made great progress in this region in development, but poverty remains still the biggest disparity in our area.

Education systems in the region remain weak, both in the breadth of coverage, being primarily urban and elite-based, and in the quality of education of the fundamental institutions such as judicial systems, legislatures, elections, commissions and political parties.

Hemispheric integration can assist in the development of countries of the region; however, we should not consider integration as an end in itself but as a tool which, properly utilized, will help us achieve sustainable development.

At my department at CIDA, we believe strongly that constructive civil society organizations have a crucial role to play in the development of their societies as no development can be sustainable without the engagement of civil society.

I want to leave it at that, and I would like to listen to what our friends have to say. It's good to see all of you today.

Thank you for coming.

