

NGOs. Susan Brown from CIDA told the participants about joint CIDA-NGO humanitarian assistance and food aid initiatives in Burma. While the bilateral desk is unable to do anything at the present, a proposal has been drafted to work with the Burmese diaspora in developing a plan for democratic transition based on broad consensus. Another developmental problem facing CIDA and Canadian NGOs is the growing number of internally displaced people. How should we address such an internal issue in the context of sovereign states? How do we address system and mechanism of aid delivery? These questions are complicated since, as some participants pointed out, helping the internally displaced may actually facilitate government led forced relocation efforts. In some cases the Canadian government would end up feeding labour camps set up by the Burmese repressive regime.

Peter Globensky talked about the Canadian Lutheran World Relief peace building initiatives aimed at displacing the SPDC and addressing issues that a potentially new government would have to face. The basis of these initiatives is to build a consensus in the Burmese society among the various ethnic groups and approach reform multilaterally. A potentially new government will have to face a gutted economy, deteriorating infrastructure and wide-spread poverty. The Lutheran World Relief project attempts to prepare to face such a predicament through an inclusive and legitimate process. At present most energy is invested in consolidating the position of the democratic movement. Towards that end, there is an effort to develop consensus of the government in exile and attempt to advance dialogue from there.

Peter Globensky then pointed out the sea change at CIDA in addressing the problems faced by the Burmese people. Some really good projects aimed at improving the access to health and food as well as with refugees have strengthened Canada's credibility. However, as social and physical infrastructures deteriorate, there is a great need for training and education even though some of these peace building activities are already under way, health training (psychology) as well as computer training are just two examples.

There is a need now to coordinate them and create a capacity building framework. This would involve a multilateral efforts on the part of NGOs, European (Euro-Burma office) as well as North American donors that would build on years of experience and could be submitted to CIDA for funding. An "ODAable" framework for Burma should be created so that funds can be allocated. This would involve an agreement of the CIDA and DFAIT Ministers. Moreover, CIDA funding should correspond to the long term attention that capacity building requires, one-year horizon is simply not adequate.

Gary Rozema concluded by saying that the economic and humanitarian problems can only be solved politically. He was sceptical that issues such as HIV, AIDS, and malnutrition can be solved while the current regime is in power.