

REPORT FROM THE ROUNDTABLE ON THE AMERICAS LOOK AHEAD TO WINDSOR

**April 26, 2000
Ottawa**

On April 26, 2000, government officials, NGOs and experts met to share information and ideas about activities leading up to the OAS General Assembly in Windsor (June 4-6, 2000). The roundtable was also a good opportunity to reflect on the development of Canada's Hemisphere policy and public input. Organised by the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development, the roundtable participants included the Hon. David Kilgour, M.P., Secretary of State, Latin America and Africa, George Haynal, Assistant Deputy Minister, Americas, Nancy Thede, ICHRDD, Melissa MacLean, Canadian Council for International Cooperation and others.

1. Framing the Discussion

Steven Lee, Chair, welcomed all and outlined the goal of the roundtable: to share information among the government officials and civil society participants.

Minister Kilgour made a brief presentation. He said that the participation of civil society in the development of foreign policy is important. The Hemisphere faces large challenges including the lack of investment, low levels of income, lack of participation in mass education, corruption, marginalised Indigenous Peoples, and gender inequalities.

Canada can play a meaningful part in Latin American development. The 10th anniversary of Canada's membership in the OAS marks a good opportunity to put people first in the Hemisphere and focus on issues such as human security, human rights, Indigenous Peoples, war-affected children and Corporate Social Responsibility. The OAS General Assembly in Windsor is not just a trade meeting. Minister Kilgour was encouraged by the success of the Model OAS General Assembly in Edmonton and expressed his support for multilateralism.

The OAS General Assembly will be a great opportunity for Canadians to learn about the Hemisphere. The presence of civil society in Windsor could also contribute to strengthening the public policy making process. The hope is for a greater cooperation throughout the region and the revitalisation of the Inter-American Indigenous Institute, Minister Kilgour concluded.