

Summary

The Human Rights Monitoring Network is a simple way to use Canadian technology and expertise to link Human Rights workers across Guatemala.

It is based on a cross-country e-mail network which is linked to a central hub in Guatemala City, which, in turn, is connected to the Internet. Human rights workers will be able to update each other using simple e-mail technology. The central hub will use that information, and pertinent human rights material gathered on the internet, to produce a regular Web page report on the Human Rights situation in Guatemala. The report will be accessible to such international organisations as the International centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and other bodies concerned about human rights violations. It will also be available throughout Guatemala for such organisations as the Ombudsman's Office on Human Rights, and individual human rights groups and will be sent back to the participating groups throughout the country.

The aim of this is to allow for ease of communication and transparency in human rights monitoring. At a later stage in Guatemala's transition to a civil society it is hoped to involve branches of the government in this network.

The hub in Guatemala City will be located in the country's first Human Rights Centre, the only such centre outside Costa Rica. Its development is already supported by the Canadian Embassy in Guatemala.

The Human Rights Monitoring Network will be a showcase for Canadian computer expertise, its developments in computer software and its advanced high tech communications abilities. It will also be an example of Canada's continued commitment to the protection of Human Rights and the development of a democratic society.

The main cost of the project is in the computer hardware; approximately 10 computers will be required. There is also the development of simple software, and communications consultancy fees. This plan will make use of the Foreign Affairs International Trade Youth Intern programme participants, in the establishment of the network and its continuing development.

It also provides an opportunity for Canada to be further involved in ensuring a lasting peace in Guatemala through public relation campaigns. One method being explored is the production of short "democracy ads" to be broadcast on radio -- the country's mass medium; these will be in four indigenous languages as well as Spanish and include catchy jingles and