



Free Media

Participants who addressed free media discussed whether Canada should promote freedom of the media in Asia-Pacific and how. They also discussed how Canada could help develop communications/media capacity in the region and whether there was a role for institutions such as RCI, the private sector, or NGOs in achieving greater media freedom, and if so, who should take the lead.

“Canadians easily recognize that freedom of the media, derived from the larger freedom of expression that belongs to everyone, is an essential of democracy.”

But Canadians are also familiar with cultural sensitivities – with a shared desire to create and manage our own communications media safe from the interference by powerful outsiders.

Are we entitled to withhold aid or trade from a state that fails to satisfy Canadian standards of free media?”

The aim is to elicit a respect for media freedom, not to impose it.

Policy Options

1. *Canada should work to promote universal values (freedom of the press being one) notwithstanding the perceived dichotomy between East and West.*
2. *Canada should take the initiative to encourage foreign media to come and to work with Canadian media by offering fellowships supported by the media (including print, RCI and television).*
3. *Canada should maintain a quiet diplomacy approach to free media, but in some situations, such as the persecution of journalists, Canada should be more active and vocal, both diplomatically and/or through the NGO community. Building upon Canada's historical coalition-building role, Canada should collaborate with like-minded countries to pressure nations that severely restrict the free flow of communication and information.*
4. *Canada should invest RCI with the appropriate resources to act as a credible global communications vehicle committed to raising Canada's profile abroad through the provision of quality Canadian programming and international news.*
5. *Canada should promote the use of Internet and other information technologies in an effort to promote free media.*