

## SUMMARY OF POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Roundtable and focus groups emphasized the need to enhance awareness of and deepen the involvement of Aboriginal peoples in policy formation and diplomacy that represents Canada. The participants recommended the following reforms:

### **The Constitutional Voice of Aboriginal peoples of Canada**

Canada needs to build an effective and responsible Aboriginal voice in foreign affairs consistent with the constitutional mandates of s. 35(1) of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. Structuring, promoting, and coordinating these Aboriginal voices are constitutional duties, rather than a political or interest group issue. Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada is not the constitutional voice of Aboriginal peoples; it is the voice of the federal administration. The courts have already outlined and mandates the necessity of constitutional consultation on all issues affecting their s. 35(1) rights. These guidelines are applicable to foreign affairs. Many of the recommendations follow on this central concept.

### **Aboriginal Secretariat**

Projecting the constitutionally protected values and heritages of Aboriginal peoples require that their voice be engaged in all aspects of foreign policy-making on a regular basis. The federal government, in partnership with Aboriginal leaders and stakeholders of constitutional rights, should develop an Aboriginal Secretariat to help consolidate and co-ordinate official international activities undertaken by members of Aboriginal peoples of Canada. A key focus would be on incubating leadership and emphasizing capacity and continuity. Under the umbrella of the Secretariat, a number of "tables" or functional areas of specialization are envisaged, allowing for increased expertise in key areas and enhanced continuity on foreign policy issues. It is recommended the Secretariat be placed outside DFAIT, and the authority and auspices of the Governor General or national Aboriginal institutions.