

Canada's interests are better served through cultivating bi-lateral relations. Nevertheless, since Canada really has no other choice than to proceed on a regional level, efforts should be aimed at improving the system.

During the discussion, Max Cameron asked whether Canada's involvement in the OAS process precludes other more effective venues or fora of involvement. He drew attention to the Land Mines process and argued that the initiative was successful precisely because it was outside of the formal arms control framework.

#### IV Analytical Component

The presence of academics enhanced the analytical discussion of Canada's involvement in the Hemisphere. In many instances, the academic analysis mirrored the priorities and policy options presented by the other participants. Arch Ritter reflected on the sea change in the context. Preoccupations about democratisation and equity have replaced the dominant issues of dealing with ruthless military regimes and the debt crisis. Today, the challenge is to facilitate a more equitable socio-economic environment in the region. Particular attention should be paid to Indigenous Peoples who bear the brunt of reforms.

Maxwell Cameron, expressed his doubts about the applicability of democratic theories that perceive elections as the *sine qua non* of a democratic regime. It is doubtful whether free elections mean democracy in Latin America where the status of human rights and freedoms remains shaky. Cameron argued that recent developments in Latin America suggest that elections are not enough to usher in a democratic regime. For this to happen political rights and freedoms must be institutionalised. Moreover, structural barriers to equality must be addressed for democracy to take root. In making policies, the government should ask how stronger institutions can be build? How can rights be extended to the marginalised? How can a democratic political system be created (i.e., political parties, unions, etc.)?

Viviana Patroni, Wilfrid Laurier University, reviewed her research on the social implications of neo-liberal policies in Argentina. She argued that policies including trade liberalisation, capital account deregulation, privatisation and commodification of the public sphere may lead to macroeconomic stabilisation. Since the implementation of the reforms, growth rates in the region have also improved. However, these policies have a grave impact on employment. In Argentina, they contributed to rising rates of unemployment, underemployment and illegal employment. Patroni asks whether such social dislocation could lead to undermining of the entire democratisation process. Will the voice of marginalised labour be heard or is democracy and elections a device Latin American governments use to stay in power? Can social problems be solved in the context of neo-liberalism? Finally, Patroni argues that preliminary research shows the link between growth rates and employment weakening. In the case of Argentina, the relationship between economic growth and employment seems to be negative.