

**REPORT FROM THE CONFERENCE ON "NEW DIPLOMACY:
THE UNITED NATIONS, LIKE-MINDED COUNTRIES AND
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS"**

**September 28-30, 1999
Millcroft Inn, Ontario, Canada**

At the end of September, academic researchers, government officials and leaders in non-governmental initiatives met at the Millcroft Inn in Acton, Ontario, to address key issues related to New Diplomacy. The meeting was the first of three looking at the impact of state and NGO initiatives on the mandates and functioning of international institutions. This discussion series is a joint project undertaken by the United Nations University in Tokyo, the Centre on Foreign Policy and Federalism at the University of Waterloo and the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development with additional support from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. The first meeting explored the conceptual complexity and operational realities of the changing international system by looking at the campaign for a global ban on anti-personnel land mines and the efforts to establish a permanent International Criminal Court. This discussion will be followed by a meeting in Tokyo, Japan (Winter 2000), addressing the wider dimensions of the international environment and New Diplomacy. That meeting will be expanded to include the question of core labour rights. The final conference in Amman, Jordan (Summer 2000), will deal more generally with the issue of UN reform.

1. INTRODUCTION

The meeting at the Millcroft Inn explored the apparent shift from concentrated top-down leadership in the international system to a multi-sourced bottom-up mode of leadership. The basic operating assumption was that the former model is being replaced by alternative sources of initiative and innovation emanating from two places in particular. The first alternative source of leadership has come from the diplomacy of middle-power, or like-minded states. The second comes from the expanding diplomatic role of civil society in general and NGOs in particular. A need was identified to intellectually catch up to these increasingly common, fluid and fast-moving diplomatic practices.

The key questions posed during this meeting were: How are these alternative leadership forms expressed through the United Nations system? How do they influence that system? What is the intensity of this emergent style of diplomacy? What is the nature of the interaction between the like-minded states and the NGOs? What institutional and other forms will this diplomacy