

In response to recognising the NCGUB, Ingrid Hall pointed out that in Canadian foreign policy States are recognised, not governments. The difficulties connected with recognising the Burmese government in exile were expressed by Minister Chan as well. He made known his doubts whether such a recognition would actually enhance the ability of Canada to influence change. However, he also said that it could make a difference if Parliament passed a motion to recognise the NCGUBS first.

Minister Chan also talked about the problems of influencing the Burmese government through the UN where any multilateral effort must be supported by a coalition of states. Lots of international support is needed to get initiatives through the UN.

Ingrid Hall informed the participants of Canada's efforts to influence Burma through ASEAN and Minister Axworthy's initiatives to exclude Burma from Canada-ASEAN Joint Cooperation Committee meetings. Meanwhile, Minister Chan pointed out that despite the positive developments in Thailand, with markets and the government more open and the NGO community more active, the military there still has much influence on politics. The officials from the Thai government must manage bilateral issues with Burma carefully due to the long porous borders between the two countries through which many Burmese refugees come to seek reprieve from repression. A deterioration of relations between the two countries could lead to a potentially explosive situation.

Participants were asked to think about the deteriorating economic and political situation in Burma and whether Canadian initiatives should not be re-directed from the borderlands – where are focussed now, to inside of the country. In response, some participants argued that Canada can influence change only to the degree that people inside Burma move. Furthermore, change will not be possible through political pressure. More indirect means like education, for example, have to be found. Garry Rozema of Burma Relief Centre pointed out that the work done on the borders penetrates into Burma quite effectively. We should not overestimate what we can actually achieve since there is no doubt that the SPDC is aware of most "subversive" foreign activities. Nevertheless, Peter Globensky, Canadian Lutheran World Relief, reminded participants of methods and creative approaches. If funds and political will exists solutions can be found. The South African experience showed that there are ways of helping. Some reacted to this idea with scepticism.

The issue of sanctions and investment bans was also discussed. Pro-arguments mirrored James Myint Swe's rationale while others drew attention to the boundaries of the international legal framework in imposing sanctions and bans. (The topic of sanctions was addressed in some detail during the 1997 Roundtable on Burma, see the annex for more information. The reaction to DFAIT's stated interpretation of the *Special Economic Measures Act*, S.C. 1992.c.17' is also available).

Next the discussion turned to Canada's developmental initiatives on the part of CIDA and