

Laurie Wiseberg: "Linking the Domestic and the International: NGO Access to International Human Rights Mechanisms and Arenas"

Laurie Wiseberg discussed the role of NGOs in international human rights arenas. The relationship between NGOs and the United Nations is closer than it has been in the past, with the U.N. relying on NGOs for information and often also for implementation of U.N. projects. NGOs also play a critical role in getting new items on the human rights agenda.

Recommendations for Canadian Foreign Policy

- The Canadian government should support educational programs that encourage nuanced thinking in students about culture, gender and human rights violations. Brenda Cossman cited the University of Toronto Faculty of Law's International Human Rights Programme, especially the internship programme, as an excellent example of such a program.
- The Canadian government needs to ally itself with groups in civil society, particularly in the area of monitoring and holding other states accountable. It is unable to accomplish its foreign policy goals alone: this was demonstrated by the important role played by NGOs at the International Criminal Court negotiations.
- The Canadian government should try to ensure access for NGOs to U.N. meetings and international arenas. NGOs are key actors on world scene. We need to overcome the perception of national governments that NGOs are the opposition. This view has slowed NGO access and reduced the credibility of NGO reports. Although the internet has given NGOs a vastly increased ability to disseminate information, the fees for website access (especially in many developing countries) creates accessibility concerns.

WORKSHOP #1: GLOBAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION AND LABOUR RIGHTS

Ian Chambers: "The ILO Declaration on Basic Principles and Rights of Labour and the Situation of the Maquila in Central America"

Ian Chambers discussed the nature of globalization and its effect on labourers. He dealt with two issues: 1) the place of international labour law within the context of global economic integration; and 2) the maquila in Central America -- the objective of ILO is not to abolish these factories, but to ensure that they operate with acceptable standards. Several attempts, such as the 1998 Declaration of the International Labour Organization (ILO), have been made to ensure that greater globalization does not lead to greater exploitation of workers.