



Participants supported the development of a Canadian International Information Strategy (or Communications Strategy), and recommended that such a strategy endorse and promote diversity, inclusivity, and popular creativity in all areas of public communication and cultural expression. To this end, it was suggested, Canada should renew its commitment to the U.N. declaration on communication as a universal right. Furthermore, the design and implementation of a Canadian International Information/Communications Strategy could draw on positive experiences from the Canadian domestic context, including successful public/private cooperation programs in research and development, local community-building, and international trade negotiations.

On the question of promoting Canadian culture, all of the participants contended that the Government should renew its commitment to facilitating the expression of Canadian values. Some participants were critical of the Government's apparent move toward "de-linking" trade policy from the promotion of democracy and human rights, and suggested that the Government link trade relations to human rights, including democratic forms of communications.

Others emphasized the way that training and technology transfer programs could introduce people in other states to Canadian values. (One government participant remarked that the Government had taken new initiatives on linkage between trade and human rights, but that many Canadians were apparently not aware of them, and suggested that there is a need for the Government to be more "transparent" in this regard.) On the other hand, several participants were concerned that policies of this sort could amount to a kind of cultural imperialism, and called for new levels of subtlety and sensitivity in policy design and implementation.

Others expressed scepticism about the effectiveness of placing conditions on trade policies, since large corporations can avoid restrictions by operating through other countries. One participant argued that, rather than the Government broadcasting Canadian values abroad, Canadian citizens should be given the opportunity to use new communications technologies to interact directly with people in other societies.

All of the participants were clearly concerned with the danger that Canadian culture might be swamped by that of other countries (the United States in particular), and many agreed that this danger could be at least partially countered at the global level. Several of the participants argued for the creation or extension of agencies for the production and distribution of Canadian "cultural products" abroad. Among the key proposals in this regard were:

- establish an international institute for Canadian culture and communications (the Association for Progressive Communications, based in South Africa, was suggested as a possible model. Concern was raised that this might lead Americans to see the institute as targeted directly at U.S. cultural products);
- establish an English-language equivalent to the TV5 French-language broadcast service; this could build on recent partnership initiatives of TVO (another participant argued that such a service would not be viable, since: i. English language rights are more expensive than French ones, ii. TV5 viewership market is smaller and less competitive, iii. there are cheaper ways to deliver information services to Canadians abroad);
- recognize the continuing importance of Radio Canada International as a source of Canadian information and a creative international voice,