

CYAP also supported the efforts of non-governmental organizations in launching discussions on the role of women in economic development, human rights and international business, freedom of the press in Hong Kong, sustainable development, and democratic transition in Asia Pacific. The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade also assisted with funding for the People's Summit. Organized by a broad-based coalition of labour, environment, human rights, and women's groups, the Summit was held in Vancouver in parallel with the APEC Leaders meeting, providing a meaningful perspective on APEC and its role in promoting equitable development. Canada also hosted APEC's FEEEP (food, energy, environment, economic development, and population) initiative at a symposium in Saskatoon September 2-4. Some of the world's leading experts met to explore new approaches to ensure that Asia Pacific's economic prosperity is sustainable and that growth takes into account social and development issues.

Founded in 1931, the Couchiching Institute of Public Affairs is an educational forum that discusses national and international issues. Academics, politicians, writers and other opinion leaders gather each summer at Geneva Park in Ontario to discuss the changing nature of Canadian society and the world. The 1997 Conference, "Canada and the Asia Pacific Promise: Hope, Hype and Reality" covered the range of Canada's interests at home and in Asia Pacific, including: economic dynamism and the search for stability in East Asia, the Asian dimension in Canada, trade and investment, and political change and international security. The University of Toronto/York University Joint Centre on Asia Pacific Studies addressed similar issues in May at a conference on "Human Rights and Democratic Transition in Asia Pacific". Other groups, such as the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development and the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, also challenged Canadians to examine the difficult choices that must be made as Canada promotes its economic and political interests in Asia Pacific.

The Canadian government places a high value on the contribution of academics, business, youth, women, NGOs, and other groups in developing Canada's foreign policy in Asia Pacific. Canada has also encouraged other APEC members to consult with all sectors of society on policy issues. CYAP's value-added in this effort was to involve greater numbers of Canadians in the debate and open new channels of communication between Canadians, government institutions, and the various peoples of the region.

Getting the Message Out: CYAP and the Media

A brief scan of news clippings from across Canada reveals that CYAP was generally well-received. Journalists, local politicians, and other opinion leaders believed in CYAP and recognized that it was a positive initiative for their community. The Regina Leader Post, in particular, published an editorial emphasizing the economic importance of Asia Pacific to Canada, the popularity of Dragon Boat Racing, and its contribution to cross cultural understanding, echoing many of CYAP most important themes.