



THE 1997
PEOPLE'S
SUMMIT
on APEC

DAILY SUMMIT

YOUTH
FORUM

day 1

COMMUNIQUÉ

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1997

PEOPLE'S SUMMIT
LAUNCHES

Summit events open with Youth Forum

The 1997 People's Summit on APEC got off the ground yesterday with the opening of the Youth Forum. The five day forum, hosted by CoDevelopment Canada, brings together 77 youth aged 16 to 19 to generate dialogue and discussion between youth from BC, the rest of Canada and the 18 APEC nations. Youth at the forum will also work to ensure that the opinions and concerns of youth are included within the agenda of the People's Summit on APEC.

Forum delegates spent Friday in a range of activities, discussions, art-making, and "icebreakers" designed to begin to build an awareness and understanding of each other's experiences, perspectives, and goals, which participants will develop as they face weighty topics in the days ahead.

Today delegates will start the day hearing from guest speaker Seth Klein of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, and in the afternoon from David Orchard, a Saskatchewan farmer and author who is the chair of Citizens Concerned About Free Trade. The day's eight workshops include UBC Global Development, Rediscovery, Child Labour, Native Youth Movement, Primate World Relief, Racial Justice, Labour Economics and an introduction to Co-op Radio, Vancouver's community access radio station.

Youth come from all over

The Youth Forum's participants come from a range of backgrounds, schools, organizations and experiences.

While many of the 77 delegates come from Vancouver, others come from around the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island, and across B.C. Delegates from outside the province include Simcoe, Kitchener and Ajax in Ontario, Prince Albert in Saskatchewan, and Westmount in Quebec, as well as delegates from Newfoundland and the Yukon. International delegates come from New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Chile, Mexico, China, Indonesia, Chile, Korea, the Philippines, Malaysia and the United States.

Delegates welcomed

Smita Reebye, 16, welcomed delegates to the Youth Forum with a personal message of the honour and privilege she felt at being with such a group. "We have spent months preparing for this event, and there were many moments of anxiety and distress mixed with our youthful enthusiasm," said Reebye. "The next few days will be certainly exciting and we look ahead to forging new and lasting friendships.

"In addition to all the fun and excitement we will have together," Reebye told the assembled delegates at the opening ceremonies, "we will also have a first-hand opportunity to build bridges between our countries and our peoples."

Reebye then outlined some of the challenges faced by young people across borders and cultures, introducing some of the topics delegates would be working on in the days ahead. In closing her welcome, Reebye said, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. We are poised for a long and exciting journey. We, the youth gathered here, have taken the first step."