

Integrated Summary of Reports from Brainstorming Sessions

Context of Canadian Foreign Policy in the Americas

At the three brainstorming working groups the following general points were made:

- **Human Security as an umbrella approach to foreign policy in the Americas** allows for the inclusion of issues such as poverty and individual's safety. Discussions about drugs and small arms are too limited on their own.
- The **trade agenda** alone (perceived as the primary driving mechanism for Canadian involvement in the region) has been too narrow. Therefore, it should include other issues falling under the human security umbrella (i.e., the social impact of globalisation).
- The **role and place of the United States** was discussed. Canada's approach to some issues such as, for example, resolution of conflict and the input of multicultural groups and their ideas, differs from the U.S.
- **Indirect actions of states and/or regional blocks** (US, Europe, Asian Tigers) may have consequences on the business environment in Latin America.
- The **extent to which Canada is willing to intervene to promote democracy** and costs related to such intervention in terms of defence and policing were addressed. In particular, promoting democracy without generating neo-colonial sentiments was identified as important by some.
- Canada's **capacity** for meaningful involvement in the hemisphere was raised. What effective roles can Canadians play in human rights protection? Core Canadian values should be reflected in Canada's foreign policy (especially Free Trade). There is a need for Canadians to learn more about hemisphere's environmental, social, and economic reality. Opportunities should be created to involve small and medium enterprises as well as Canadian youth.
- **Those critical of the government policies** said there were contradictions not only in Canadian foreign policy, but also in the government policy as a whole. Some critical questions were raised, including the promotion of civil society abroad amidst damage done to Canadian civil society as a result of the government cut backs or in the wake of the 1997 APEC incident. Others who perceive neo-liberal globalisation and structural adjustment policies as negative phenomena worried about poverty and insecurity. Canada needs to address problems at home to promote change abroad, they said.

Ideas for Policy Options

Participants raised several key issues they feel require further policy attention. Some propose that Canada as the host for upcoming meetings, is well positioned to lead on the following issues: