

It is recognized that the Summit of the Americas process must remain and must be seen to be relevant and responsive to the real concerns of the citizens of the region. To this end, the Summit in Quebec City has a clear focus on people and how they can be given greater opportunities to participate in the political, economic, social and cultural mainstream of their societies and the region.

In preparing for the 2001 Summit, Canada has engaged citizens' organizations at both the national and hemispheric level. Meetings have been held with representatives of over 1,000 citizens' groups and networks, such as non-governmental organizations, business people, unions and academics. Financial support has been given to such organizations as the Youth Summit and the People's Summit.

Since 1994, Canada has been putting summit proposals into action at home and elsewhere in the hemisphere and has been monitoring implementation of summit mandates through the SIRG. These functions are critical to ensuring that the summits are successful in advancing the issues and plans of action endorsed by leaders. As chair of the SIRG and host of the 2001 Summit, Canada is working with its partners throughout the Americas to prepare a declaration and action plan that will define the road to democratic, economic and social progress at the beginning of the 21st century.

The declaration and action plan for 2001 will define priorities within a coherent political, economic and social agenda. The documents are being designed to be mutually supportive and to set out a vision and mandates for practical initiatives that will strengthen national and hemispheric institutions in support of shared values and collective undertakings. Their purpose is to make explicit a fundamental commitment to creating conditions to sustain democracy, increase prosperity, provide equality of opportunity and enhance social equity to the benefit of all citizens.