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CCFPD SUMMARY REPORT: THE AMERICAS

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The changing political and economic climate in Latin America and the Caribbean over the past decades opened the door for Canada to play a bigger role in the region. The spread of relatively democratic regimes in Latin America, economic liberalisation, and more recently, the emergence of an active civil society have brought unprecedented opportunities and posed challenges for policy makers, including the need to reassess Canadian interests and priorities. Evidenced by the wide range of regional events hosted by Canada over these two years, Canadian engagement in the Hemisphere has grown steadily as a result of these shifts.

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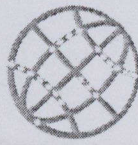
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The changing political and economic climate in Latin America and the Caribbean over the past decades opened the door for Canada to play a bigger role in the region. The spread of relatively democratic regimes in Latin America, economic liberalisation, and more recently, the emergence of an active civil society have brought unprecedented opportunities and posed challenges for policy makers, including the need to reassess Canadian interests and priorities. Evidenced by the wide range of regional events hosted by Canada over these two years, Canadian engagement in the Hemisphere has grown rapidly as a result of these shifts:

- The XIII Pan American Games (Winnipeg, July 23 - August 8, 1999),
 - The Conference of the Spouses of Heads of State and Government of the Americas (Ottawa, September 29 - October 1, 1999),
 - The Free Trade Area for the Americas Trade Ministerial Meeting (Toronto, November 3 - 4, 1999),
 - The Americas Business Forum (Toronto, November 1 - 3, 1999),
 - The Organisation of American States General Assembly (Windsor, June 4 - 6, 2000), and
 - the upcoming Third Summit of the Americas (Quebec City, April 21 - 22, 2001).
- (For more information on these events, please, visit: www.americascanada.org)

Ministers and Canadian officials, including David Kilgour (Secretary of State, Latin America and Africa), Marc Lortie (the Prime Minister's personal representative for the Summit of Americas), and George Haynal (Assistant Deputy Minister, Americas), recognised from the outset the importance of civil society engagement in developing Canada's foreign policy toward the Hemisphere. In one of the series of Americas roundtables designed to solicit public views, George Haynal pointed to the need "to broaden the policy circle beyond Ottawa and the traditional stakeholders" (Calgary, March 17, 1999). Mindful of political, diplomatic, institutional, and other constraints, Ministers and officials consistently signalled their willingness to listen and reflect public voices at the OAS General Assembly and in the agenda for the Quebec City Summit in April 2001, for example.

To help fulfil the government's commitment to public input, the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development (CCFPD) engaged NGOs, experts, academics, labour, business people, parliamentarians, and the media from across the country to contribute thinking into the development of Canada's Hemisphere policy. Since March 1999, the CCFPD organised or funded nine roundtables on the Americas and commissioned a number of Policy Options Papers:

- Developing a Canadian Discussion on the Americas (Calgary, March 17, 1999) – webcast live and now archived at www.panam-bydesign.net/ccfpd/video.htm (in partnership with byDesign E Lab, McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology at the University of Toronto and the Calgary Centre for Performing Arts)
- Democratisation in the Americas (Halifax, July 9, 1999)
- Initiatives for Democratic Education in the Americas: Education and the Free Trade Area of the Americas, IDEA (Vancouver, July 13, 1999)

- Priorities, Plans and Activities (Ottawa, August 30, 1999)
- Governance, Civil Society and the Americas (Victoria, January 28, 2000)
- Threats to Democracy in the Americas, FOCAL, UBC (Vancouver, March 3-4, 2000)
- Canada, Indigenous Peoples and the Hemisphere (Winnipeg, March 23, 2000)
- Look Ahead to Windsor (Ottawa, April 26, 2000)
- Small Arms and the OAS Roundtable (Ottawa, April 28, 2000)

Policy Options Papers include:

- Canada and Hemispheric Narcotrafficking, James Rochlin (Fall 1999)
- Le Canada et la Zléa, Joël Monfils, Martin Roy, Gordon Mace and Jean-Philippe Thérien (Fall 1999)

Throughout the series of roundtables the role of civil society in foreign policy-making was endorsed by both the non-government participants and government officials. The practice of engaging the public in policy making has been growing around the world. This trend is evidenced, for example, by the CCFPD's discussions with representatives of the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Unidad de Coordinación y Enlace), the establishment of a Unit for the Promotion of Democracy at the OAS, and the growing presence of NGOs at government-hosted events. Canada, in particular, has a flourishing Americas policy community on which to draw on for advice and partnership and is seen as the major promoter of civil society inclusion in the Hemisphere. Despite these encouraging trends, policy makers are faced with challenges posed by anti-globalisation activists at home and abroad. Questions of how to approach street protests and how to integrate better the views of civil society were frequently raised. The need to listen to the messages coming from the streets was emphasised along with the important role communication strategies play (Ottawa, April 26, 2000).

The roundtable discussions also recognised that Canada is well positioned to assume leadership in the Hemisphere since it is well respected in the region and, by the virtue of its middle-power status and non-colonial past, does not appear threatening. Indeed, a suggestion was made to see Canada as a kind of "Scandinavia" of the Hemisphere, through our use of soft power approaches, including the elements of Third Way or social democracy and multiculturalism (Ottawa, August 30, 1999).

The need to address the challenges of globalisation and mitigate the negative consequence it has on the still fragile Latin American democracies was expressed consistently. Human Security was perceived generally as the right approach to tackle the exhausting list of globalisation-related threats. According to Barbara Arneil (Calgary, March 17, 1999) these threats could be broadly grouped into three categories:

1. threats stemming from a new economic environment (i.e., emergence of the so called "competition state" and the growing reliance on free markets for economic and social development, growing polarisation between the rich and the poor, instability of the capital financial markets, indebtedness, etc.),
2. threats stemming from growing "transnationalism"/trans-boundary issues (i.e., drugs and small

- arms trafficking, migration and refugee movements, environmental degradation, spread of infectious diseases, etc.),
3. threats brought by the changing nature of conflict (conflict increasingly occurs within state borders and is often generated by the state or para-government itself, whereby the state becomes the source of insecurity).

The recommendations provided in the course of public discussions reflect concerns about globalisation and broadly fall into 8 thematic groups:

- Strengthening Democracy: Civil Society and Democratic Governance
- Social Structure and the Economy
- The Environment
- Education
- Technology
- Aid, Emergency Assistance and Disaster Preparedness
- Institutional and Procedural Challenges
- Security Issues: Small Arms

1. Strengthening Democracy: Civil Society and Good Governance

Despite the general euphoria about the triumph of democracy in Latin America there still remain some serious challenges including: the nature of democratic institutions, respect and observance of human rights, and more generally, backsliding by some governments to authoritarianism. From the Northern or Western perspective, part of the problem relates to defining democracy. Maxwell Cameron (Halifax, July 9, 1999) pointed out that there has been an apparent shift in perceiving the viability of a democracy: "The focus on procedures and institutions, elections in particular, has shifted to evaluating democratic behaviour and outcomes." The number of elections is no longer considered a sufficient indicator of a consolidated democracy.

It was assumed, in general, that *human rights* are at the core of democracy. Many agreed that Canadian foreign and trade policy should respect human rights, as enshrined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. The Canadian government was encouraged to provide leadership in developing a well defined and effective mechanism (as was done with the International Criminal Court) to strengthen the international human rights regime in the Hemisphere. An important point was raised at the Halifax roundtable that *economic, social and cultural rights* are as important for a democracy as political rights and attention was drawn to the disintegrative trends globalisation has on the regional social fabric and culture. While some recommended promotion of human rights in trade and other economic agreements and policies (i.e., investment and taxation policy), others criticised such an approach as a short-term fix based on an often fickle market economy. The role of economic sanctions was also addressed frequently with little consensus as to their effectiveness.

Many participants agreed that Canada should promote *the development of civil society and good*

governance. To do so usefully, the need to recognise and understand the long-standing histories of diverse Latin American societies and communities was raised. Protecting and strengthening Latin American civil societies through the capacity building work of Canadian-based NGOs as well as others (i.e., government departments, missions, private sector initiatives) was acknowledged as important. Grass-roots and local-level projects were seen as particularly effective.

Inclusion of traditionally excluded groups and access to decision-making and deliberative bodies was also identified as imperative for further democratic development in the region. Many agreed that inclusion and access should be institutionalised and become an integral part of governance. Special attention should be paid to Indigenous Peoples, the disabled, people in poverty and women. Canada could help by sharing its best practices in working across the state and civil society divide. In particular, we could contribute to strengthening bridges between civil society and the government and to open up space for public participation in policy development.

Concerns about corruption and other threats to democracy including: the centralisation of power, resurgent militaries, the lack of judicial independence and rule of law, weak political parties and representative institutions, and social inclusion, were frequently raised. Many

highlighted the necessity of putting democratic development into the context of globalization and free markets. Some argued, for instance, that the fundamental problem of good governance and the related "regression syndrome" in Latin America is the declining capacity of states to carry out their traditional roles, including such basic functions as the provision of common security.

Focus on Indigenous People. On March 23, 2000, leaders and representatives of Indigenous Peoples from Canada, the United States, Guatemala, Panama, and Mexico, business leaders, government officials, and others met to reflect on Indigenous Peoples' issues in the Hemisphere. The participants included, Assembly of First Nations, National Chief Phil Fontaine, Marc Lortie (the Prime Minister's personal representative for the Summit of Americas), Frank O'Dea (Madison Grant), Chief Lydia Hwitsum, (Cowichan First Nation), and Maxine Wiber (Environment Rio Algom). Among the issues raised were the need to actively include Indigenous People in designing policies that affect them, the need to address racism on both sides and to re-assess laws, policies and discourse (including written texts) that reinforce the socio-economic and political marginalisation of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and abroad. Extensive discussion revolved around the necessity to strengthen the link between investment (or economic development) and the concerns of Indigenous People about their environment and their way of life. Some argued that in order to establish a presence for Indigenous Peoples at the OAS, the Inter-American Indigenous Institute should be reformed and revitalised. Other international bodies, such as the WTO and the UN should also address Indigenous Peoples issues on a continuous basis. Canada could foster dialogue between states and Indigenous Peoples and push for stronger language on Indigenous People's issues at the OAS. A discussion paper was prepared by Paul Chartrand, *Canada and the Indigenous Peoples of the Western Hemisphere: Putting Principles into Action in Trade and Investment*, and a spiritual ceremony conducted by Consuelo Cutzal (Coordinating Council of Organisations of the Mayan Peoples of Guatemala).

Cameron (*Threats to Democracy in the Americas*) pointed out that a series of broader theoretical dilemmas (considerations) should be recognised and negotiated when attempting to address threats to democracy at the Quebec City Summit and beyond. They include:

- the tension between promoting democracy and sovereignty,
- the gap between the Santiago Summit commitments to democratisation and its less than vigorous implementation,
- the growing disconnect between the desire to establish rule of law and the promotion of democracy,
- the need for a democracy to deliver the goods,
- in Columbia, the human security optic may usefully shift the focus from drugs to peace.

On a more concrete level, assistance to reforming judiciaries, the legal system and the tax systems could be useful. Support of the media is also often beneficial. However, much thought has to be given to which models fit the realities of the region best and which can be actually implemented.

2. Social Structure and the Economy

The growing *inequality in income and wealth distribution* in the region was on the mind of many participants. Some argued that economic inequality should be addressed through targeted social policy. There was an extensive debate about the applicability of social rights and environmental protection clauses in trade agreements, with some doubting their feasibility and effectiveness. A clear and transparent legal and regulatory framework for trade and investment was often promoted.

The views on deepening the *economic integration* of the Hemisphere, including trade liberalisation and deregulation of capital flows were sharply divided. While some promoted integration as the only means to economic development, others raised concerns about its negative socio-economic and cultural consequences. Nevertheless, it was emphasised that the integration process should be guided by a set of principles:

- FTAA negotiations should be conducted in the context of WTO

Focus on Trade: Le Canada et la Zléa (Joël Monfils et al.). Alors que s'achève la présidence du Canada à la tête du Comité de négociations commerciales (CNC), peu de progrès ont été réalisés dans les négociations visant la création de la Zone de libre-échange des Amériques (ZLÉA). Jusqu'à maintenant, le Canada a développé une politique commerciale relativement uniforme à l'intérieur des différents forums de négociation régionaux et multilatéraux. Le gouvernement canadien favorise la mise sur pied d'accords commerciaux compréhensifs impliquant des niveaux de discipline commerciale élevés ainsi qu'une participation effective de la société civile à l'intérieur du processus de négociation. Ce document de politique vise d'abord à mettre en relief les difficultés associées à la mise en oeuvre de la politique commerciale canadienne dans un contexte régional. Il remet en question l'application indifférenciée de la politique commerciale du Canada dans les Amériques compte tenu de la dynamique particulière des négociations dans cette région et des différents objectifs formulés par le gouvernement face au processus d'intégration hémisphérique.

processes

- deeper integration should be accompanied by a powerful reaffirmation of rule-based market economies
- bureaucratic barriers should be removed
- initiatives aimed at building a "business culture" in the region should be developed

Furthermore, many suggested that Canada should take the lead in ensuring that the Free Trade negotiation process is open, transparent, and politically accountable to maximise the involvement of civil society and contribute to increased democratisation in the Hemisphere. Others challenged the Canadian government to take the lead in encouraging the G-8 to cancel the *foreign debt* of the world's poorest countries. The government should work within the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to develop programs of finance and development that are socially just and benefit the majority of populations. Canada should lead a process of ensuring that IFIs operate with increased transparency, openness and accountability. Steps should be taken in promoting the idea of a Tobin tax to counterbalance the negative effect that *currency speculation* has on the poor in the region. Canada could also offer its expertise in helping the integration of disabled people into economic structures. Another area where Canadian expertise could be useful is public administration.

Focus on Drugs: Canada and Hemispheric Narcotrafficking. The ascendancy of narcotrafficking deserves serious attention due to the huge threat it wages against human security and legitimate political structures, writes James Rochlin of the Okanagan University College (Kelowna, B.C.) in a paper commissioned by the CCFPD. Rochlin goes on to say that the informal economy of narcotrafficking is immense both globally and within Canada. The wealth generated leads to the emergence of parallel security structures that undermine the capacity of the state. Social power is redistributed affecting various actors from drug addicts to corrupt states to groups such as "Biker Gangs" and Latin American guerrillas. Canada's role in the context of hemispheric narcotrafficking is significant. Though more hidden than in Mexico or Colombia, Canada is a consumer, producer and a distributor of illicit drugs. This has serious health and other implications. Hemispheric narcotrafficking also threatens Canadian investment abroad. Therefore, there is a need to generate foreign policy options to address this problem. Among long run viable options is legalising drugs, says Rochlin. He also offers other short to medium term options for Canada, specifically in policy toward Mexico and Colombia.

3. The Environment

Many participants insisted that environment and ecological concerns must remain paramount. Economic development should proceed with a much longer view to ecological issues. Promoting sustainable development was identified as imperative to human security. A general view surfaced that supporting local civil society initiatives (as opposed to mega projects) often produce a more cost-effective result for sustainable development. Canada should promote and accelerate the implementation of commitments for sustainable development made at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit.

4. Education

Access to education, including informal education, was considered by many as crucial to human security and economic development. Therefore, many participants suggested that Canada should support education responsive to the needs of the marginalised and put emphasis on providing students with skills to meet basic human needs. Moreover, education should aim at generating income for the poor, diminishing thus the income distribution gap in the region. It was suggested that educating women could help them assume a greater leadership role and contribute to improving gender equality. Initiatives to enhance greater mobility for students and to improve higher education were also encouraged. Corporate business influence over education was

Focus on Education: Education and the Free Trade Area of the Americas. On July 13, 1999, the Canadian Initiates for Democratic Education in the Americas (IDEA) brought together youth, educators, government and other organisations to raise awareness about the Inter-American Program of Education and the Americas Summit Process in general. The consultation also provided an opportunity for Canadian organizations involved in education to debate the key documents developed for the Hemispheric IDEA Conference (September 29 -October 3, 2000, Quito, Ecuador). In the course of the day-long meeting participants discussed youth perspectives, corporate influence in schools, globalization and youth organising, and the IDEA process.

frequently criticised and calls to minimise it made. The necessity to understand the local cultural and socioeconomic context in order to develop good programmes was stressed time and time again.

5. Technology

Some participants emphasised the role new Information and Communications Technologies can play in imparting information and connecting communities. Through ICTs, our values as Canadians can be spread instantaneously across the Hemisphere. In this context, Canada could capitalise on its "geo-political" position as the "Scandinavia" of the Americas to promote the "culture" of Human Security, distinct from that of the United States, said Liss Jeffrey (McLuhan Program in Culture and Technology).

ICTs could also help nurture engaged and well informed publics, strengthening democratic governance at home and abroad. Therefore, ICTs should be central to the Hemispheric agenda. Initiatives should be developed aimed at narrowing the "digital" divide between poor and rich countries and creating a public "digital" space for policy discussion and deliberation.

While some insisted that the provision of clean water and basic human necessities should take precedence to closing the digital divide, others responded by saying that leaving the poor regions out of the "global village" would marginalise them even more in the longer run. Steps should be taken to facilitate public access to ICTs even in the poorest countries, together with

helping to meet basic human needs.

6. Aid, Emergency Assistance and Disaster Preparedness

The need for improvement in the quality and quantity of aid was often expressed. Canada could develop initiatives in disaster relief (with a particular focus on youth and women) aimed at building resilient communities.

7. Institutional and Procedural Challenges

Many agreed that Canada should strive to improve the OAS process. The agenda for Quebec City should be practical (i.e., topical, credible, cost-effective), manageable, and fall within the context of Human Security.

8. Security Issues: Small Arms

Focus on Small Arms. On April 28, 2000, the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development, in partnership with the Non-proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament Division and the Inter-American Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, organised a roundtable on small arms in the Hemisphere. The roundtable brought together experts, academics, NGOs and government officials to share views, ideas and recommendations on various small arms initiatives. Participants included, among others, Wendy Cukier (Ryerson University), Peggy Mason (Council for Peace and Security), Juan Ronderas (York University), Renata Wielgosz (Canadian Permanent Mission to the OAS) and Mark Gaillard (Non-proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament Division, DFAIT). Yvon Dandurand (International Centre for Criminal Law and Justice Reform), Edward Laurence and William Godnick (Monterey Institute) joined the roundtable by phone. The participants agreed that the assumed distinction between the "licit" and the "illicit" poses challenges of developing an effective small arms non-proliferation regime in the Hemisphere. Many raised the need to bring Latin American civil society into the process. Among the recommendations were the need to amend the *1997 Convention* to include domestic weapons control, the need for capacity-building measures to address the gap between formal multilateral regulations making and domestic capacity to ratify/implement treaties, and finally, the need to address the culture of violence and wide-spread disrespect for the rule of law in many Latin American countries. At the closing, Canadian and other NGOs were encouraged to mount an awareness raising campaign along the lines of the campaign to ban landmines.

Possible Canadian Foreign Policy Niches:

- *Canada as "the Nordics" of the Hemisphere (Social policy, environment, human rights experience, peacekeepers, non-colonial power position)*
- *Canada as a long-standing partner (trading and other) with the United States (Knowledge of the U.S., long experience in bi-lateral relations.)*
- *Canada as a leader in civil society engagement and good governance*
- *Canada as a leader in closing the "digital" divide*

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