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# Policy Options

1997

NATIONAL FORUM  
ON CANADA'S INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS  
*Asia-Pacific*

*Project Management and Policy Development*

REPORTS



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1997

NATIONAL FORUM ON CANADA'S INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Coordinators

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**REPORTS**

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## INTRODUCTION

The first 1997 National Forum meeting was held on April 25-26, 1997 at Dunsmuir Lodge in Victoria, British Columbia. Fifty participants gathered from across Canada, and from across various sectors of Canadian society. The goal of the National Forum is to discuss issues in foreign policy in order to generate ideas and policy options. As 1997 has been designated Canada's Year of Asia-Pacific with Canada hosting the Asia-Pacific Economic Commission (APEC) in Vancouver, and with civil society hosting the Peoples' Summit, in Vancouver as well, Asia-Pacific is a highly relevant region on which to focus the discussions.

### VICTORIA REPORT

John Hay, an international affairs expert, provided the context for the Forum with the presentation of his paper "Asia-Pacific: Questions and Choices". This paper was provided to each of the participants prior to the meeting to help focus the discussions, provide relevant information, and highlight many of the issues which would be critical to the day's discussions.

The task put forth for the participants was to discuss the issues and to learn from each other. As there were representatives from the business community, labour organizations, NGOs, as well as government officials, academics and youth present, the opportunity to discuss issues across sectors of civil society was actively encouraged. Emphasis was placed, not on the need to reach consensus but to generate ideas, collect them, and pass them on to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and his department.

The Forum is not a singular event, but part of a larger foreign policy process that places considerable value on citizen input and further develops the multi-sector foreign policy network in British Columbia, and in Canada.

### Working Groups

In order to focus the discussion, the participants were divided into four working groups to address the following topics: sustainable development, human rights, free media, and a business code of conduct. Each group was provided with four questions to help generate discussion and policy options, although all participants were advised that the questions were to function only as guidelines, and other avenues could be explored if necessary. All four topics are fundamentally relevant to Canada's relationship with countries in the Asia-Pacific, and the issues and policy options that emerged out of the discussions are valuable as a societal contribution to the development of Canadian foreign policy and the countries of Asia-Pacific.



## INTRODUCTION

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## ***Sustainable Development***

### ***Questions***

- 1. How should Canadians promote sustainable development in Asia-Pacific (aid, trade, private sector, new technologies etc.), and where.***
- 2. What should Canadians/Canada contribute/pay.***
- 3. Is there a minimum level of economic/industrial development needed before advancing sustainability.***
- 4. How can Canada best work with like-minded countries in promoting sustainable development.***

The discussion concerning sustainable development in Asia-Pacific centred around five observations about Canadian foreign policy in the region, and ten recommendations to enhance Canada's influence over issues related to sustainability.

### ***Observations***

- 1. Canadian engagement in Asia-Pacific is lower than in other regions in the international arena.**
- 2. Promotion of NGO activity in some countries in Asia-Pacific can sometimes be perceived as undermining the authority of the domestic government.**
- 3. Foreign policy can be used as a tool to respond to diverse issues in a context sensitive way.**
- 4. There is a substantive link between good governance and local capabilities for sustainable development.**
- 5. There are different levels of interest in and commitment to sustainable development in various countries of Asia-Pacific that correspond to different levels of economic development.**

From the discussion emerged three recommendations/objectives to help guide Canadian foreign policy in the Asia-Pacific region.

## **Recommendations**

1. To develop international linkages and networks of influence.
2. To pursue and coordinate unofficial consultation and collaboration. ie. Track 2 process (ARF, CSCAP, APEC study centres, PECC).
3. To increase representation of Asian-Canadians in DFAIT and international organizations involved in Asia-Pacific.
4. To promote consultative mechanisms and collaborative problem solving through the official process. ie. Track 1/APEC.
5. To ensure that issues of sustainable development are on the agendas of the other Forum meetings.
6. To integrate business and NGO input into relevant APEC fora.
7. To ensure that terms of reference for publicly funded feasibility studies in infrastructure projects include components relevant to sustainable development.
8. To make Canadian foreign policy on sustainable development explicit.
9. To develop a statement on Canadian foreign policy sustainable development values.
10. To develop and support strategies to aid in implementation of value structures in relation to issues of sustainable development concomitant with Canada's. For example:
  - a) industry awards for clean technology exporters, b) annual review of public and private sector sustainable development activities, c) partnership between private and public sector capital flows, and NGOs, to support sustainable development.

The discussion also touched on the specific role that Canadians should play in the sustainable development practices in the Asia-Pacific region. It was agreed that internationally, Canadians should promote the development and use of clean technology, and provide support to the region through the dissemination of environmental planning expertise, as well as foster educational links between Canada and Asia-Pacific. Canadians should also support sustainable development in the region by establishing linkages with like-minded countries through efforts at collaborative, non-competitive research and development.

The group supported a model of sustainable development that could reconcile the need for economic growth with a social imperative (to create and maintain an environment in which others want to live) and an equally important environmental

imperative (not to destroy the resource base).

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## ***Human Rights***

### ***Questions***

- 1. How can Canadians best promote human rights in Asia. Where.*
- 2. Are there human rights pay-offs with economic development and trade.*
- 3. How can Canadians strengthen the voice and participation of Indigenous Peoples.*
- 4. Can Canada act alone in promoting human rights. How can Canada work best with like-minded countries in promoting human rights.*

The human rights discussion revolved around eight observations and recommendations that the group developed to aid in the enhancement of Canada's role vis-a-vis the Asia-Pacific region. There was a significant level of consensus reached regarding the importance of domestic diversity and patterns of inclusion within Canada to provide the appropriate setting for valuable contributions to the human rights debate.

### ***Observations and Recommendations***

1. Issues should be addressed when representatives from minority groups are present and can contribute. eg. indigenous peoples, people of colour, women etc.
2. Indigenous peoples perspectives need to be incorporated into the contemporary foreign policy and human rights frameworks. The role of indigenous peoples needs to be incorporated and expanded upon in foreign and human rights policy and become an integral part of the "Canadian approach". As well, organizations like APEC should include and consult indigenous peoples from member countries in order to deepen understanding on various issues.
3. There must be a recognition that Canadian credibility and efficacy particularly in relation to indigenous peoples depends on Canada's domestic response to related issues.
4. While human rights have universal applicability, they also have a cultural context and therefore, a Canadian response must be context sensitive. And, as the civil, political, and economic spheres are not separate, but interdependent, strategies aimed at issues concerning human rights should not be targeted at one sphere, but

should be multi-faceted. For example, while implementing programs like the training of judges in Asia-Pacific directly targets problems of corruption in the legal system, it also opens up avenues for reform in other sectors of society.

5. There must also be a recognition that strategies can be direct or indirect, and that the indirect ones are often more effective. Human rights strategies need to incorporate both, and the choice should be driven by capacity to achieve human rights objectives, not by other factors, economic or otherwise.

6. It is important to work in concert with like-minded countries, but to remember that like-mindedness is more fluid and issue-specific than it ever has been before.

7. It is important to realize that there needs to be a move toward a different type of foreign service that is more fluid and flexible and less eurocentric, that has a greater depth of knowledge and encourages and supports greater cooperation, not only with societal sectors but with other departments and organizations. eg. the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

8. It is important to note that there is a greater receptivity in the Asia-Pacific region to approaches that emphasize economic/social rights rather than civil/political rights. This should be taken into account when considering a choice of strategy.

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### **Free Media**

#### **Questions**

1. *Should Canadians promote free media in Asia-Pacific. How. Where. (Is there a role for RCI and other Canadian media).*

2. *How can Canadians help maintain a free media in Hong Kong.*

3. *How can Canada help maintain the internet as "free media".*

4. *How can Canada work with like-minded countries to promote free media in Asia-Pacific.*

The discussion of free media revolved around the effective means of utilizing the Canadian role as a niche player in the region. The agreed objective was that Canada should act in a constructive and concerted fashion to promote a free media in cooperation with like-minded countries. The discussion then focussed on how this might best be accomplished.

A concern was raised regarding the legitimacy of Canadian support of free media in Asia-Pacific when such a large percentage of domestic media is concentrated in so

few hands. A concern also arose about the credibility of Canadian advice given the limited involvement of Canadian media (journalists, reporters etc.) directly in Asia-Pacific affairs.

Given these shortcomings, there was agreement that Canada could still have a valuable role to play. Eight recommendations were established.

### **Recommendations**

1. To emphasize the international legal framework in which a free media could operate through the constitution of a set of norms, principles, and rules.

2. To encourage a more tactical approach that would emphasize a more specific, case by case approach. This method would downplay cultural sensitivity, and take advantage of the degree of ambiguity allowed by various governments in the Asia-Pacific region.

3. To recognize free media not as something separate from the issue of human rights, but an integral component of it.

4. To define journalists as not strictly reporters. Instead, a free media should allow for the freedom of editorial writers, technical workers etc. as well.

5. To encourage Canadian embassies to place greater importance on the issue of journalists at risk, and to act in a more timely fashion on alerts given by the International Freedom of Expression Exchange.

6. To promote alternative forms of disclosure via the Internet and support the development of new technology through which information could be disseminated more quickly and efficiently. Canada should also encourage exploring avenues to lower the cost of technology to make information more accessible in Asia-Pacific.

7. To encourage Canadian journalism schools to explicitly tap into networks within Asia-Pacific through methods like exchange and the training of Asian investigative journalists in Canada.

8. To support the opening of regional institutional frameworks, particularly APEC, more thoroughly to media access through the use of daily briefs, and the development of a media centre.

## ***Business Code of Conduct***

### ***Questions***

- 1. What should a draft Code of Conduct look like (labour and human rights, protection of children and women, environment, other).***
- 2. What is the best role for business, government, citizens, in creating, promoting, enforcing a Code of Conduct.***
- 3. How can Canadians/Canada best address corruption issues.***
- 4. How can Canada best work with like-minded countries, including some in Asia-Pacific, in promoting a Code of Conduct.***

In the discussion, the group decided that in order to encourage the development and implementation of a Code of Conduct in Asia-Pacific, a set of core values needs to be established in consultation with NGOs, the business sector, and governmental organizations in the region. The International Labour Organization (ILO) was recommended as a possible model for the development of these values. In the ensuing discussion, the group agreed upon the following measures that could aid in the development of a Code of Conduct that had the potential to accurately reflect the interests of diverse sectors of society.

### **1) Roles of affected groups**

- i) Non Governmental Organizations: public education, research, information gathering and evaluation, advocacy and identification, and promotion of "best practices."**
- ii) Government: research funding, communication, and negotiation with other affected governments in the region.**
- iii) Business: public and self education, research agenda support, and development and support of human rights issues in business affairs.**

### **2) Importance of combating corruption**

- i) Necessity of a multilateral international process.**
- ii) Importance of the reformation of the legal systems in the region to reflect anticorruption and Code of Conduct standards.**

iii) Recognition that anti-corruption codes are good business practices which should be included in trade policy and agreements.

The group also touched on the importance of linkages with other like-minded countries to promote and support the establishment of a Code of Conduct. The objective would be to influence the market to reflect human rights issues. In this ongoing process, incentives rather than penalties could be utilized to encourage voluntary adoption of Code of Conduct principles. Canadian involvement in this process should be defined by a willingness to adapt to local situations and to maintain flexibility of response in a universal framework within the parameters of which all affected groups could actively participate, and basic human rights could be protected.

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## PLENARY

### Conclusion

At the end of the day, a plenary was held and a representative from each of the working groups provided a synopsis of each of the discussions. From this, several policy options were drawn that seemed to have value and resonance for many of the participants in various groups. They represent themes that ran through the discussions of the day.

### Policy Options

1. To develop lateral linkages with like-minded business in Asia-Pacific to encourage the development and adoption of Code of Conduct standards.
2. To actively support the role of NGOs as fundamentally important vehicles for education and human rights monitoring and reporting.
3. To openly support Track 2 processes. eg. through the elaboration of the role and function of APEC study centres.
4. To enhance the role of Indigenous Peoples and Asian Canadians through inclusive staffing procedures at the domestic governmental level. This would help to ensure that a diversity of opinion and experience would be available.
5. To establish incentive programs that would encourage equitable business and environmental practices in Asia-Pacific and to develop an annual reporting procedure to monitor progress.

## Introduction

The second meeting of the 1997 National Forum on Canada's International Relations was held on June 23-24 at Conrad Grebel College in Waterloo, Ontario. In keeping with parallel forums in Victoria, Québec and Halifax, and the designation of 1997 as Canada's Year of Asia-Pacific, the Forum explored "Canada's relations with the Asia-Pacific." The Forum gave particular attention to policy issues germane to both the Asia-Pacific Economic Commission (APEC) summit that will be hosted by the Canadian government in Vancouver in November and to the People's Summit, a non-governmental community alongside the official event.

### **WATERLOO REPORT**

The Steering Committee of the Waterloo National Forum invited participants from a range of social sectors — non-governmental, academic, youth, business and labour, media, and government — to explore foreign policy options for Canada's relations with the Asia-Pacific region. Most attending came from southwestern Ontario, reflecting the high degrees of interest and expertise in foreign policy development in the region. As noted in the welcoming remarks of Steering Committee member, and former federal Cabinet minister, Walter McLean, within 100 kilometres of Kitchener-Waterloo there are several universities, leading technology industries, and knowledgeable non-governmental agencies that house experience and expertise relevant to the National Forum.

## Themes and issues

Based on review of the National Forum discussion paper by journalist John Hay and a draft of the Victoria National Forum report, the Steering Committee selected five theme areas for discussion and policy development by five corresponding working groups during the Forum. These themes were: human rights and trade; sustainable development; media and communications; indigenous people, minorities and refugees; and conflict and security. Forum participants were provided with an advance package of materials containing background readings and questions to stimulate policy discussion in each of the five theme areas. During the Forum, participants were provided with additional materials including the Victoria Forum report and policy statements by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade on Canadian support for each of four policy areas: sustainable development in Asia, codes of conduct, human rights in Asia, and freedom of the media in Asia.



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Participants also benefited during the Forum's opening evening from the remarks of guest speaker, Marius Grinius, Director of the Southeast Asia Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. Mr. Grinius provided personal observations of the Asia-Pacific region "from the point of view of a practitioner" that were relevant for all working group themes. In addition, in the opening plenary session, the Working Groups heard from a panel of five experts who "set the stage" for the group discussions by reflecting on the key issues and questions for Canadian foreign policy in each theme area.

The summaries of the five working group policy discussions and recommendations were reported to the closing plenary of the Forum. John English, professor of history at the University of Waterloo, and former Vice-Chair of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, provided concluding analysis of key issues that emerged during the Forum.

Dr. English reminded participants that we are dealing in the Asia/Pacific with a region that less than three decades ago was a place of "killing fields" of extraordinary proportions. While in politics, he noted, a week may be regarded as a long time, in history a century is a short-time. Only a short time ago, the era of the Vietnam War, the region went through a series of traumas, all of which deeply involved the Western world. These events will continue to loom large in the region's place in the world and in its relations with the West.

Canadians must also repeatedly remind themselves that Canada is and will remain a peripheral player in Asia. On the other hand, Asia is anything but peripheral to Canada and to Canada's social and economic interests. While Canada is for the most part well regarded in the region, it has only very limited leverage, a central fact to be understood as we seek not only to forge strong economic links to the region but also to be an influence in support of the values that Canadians share and wish to see advanced internationally.

While the reports of the working groups identify the key issues to emerge from the day's discussion, several contextual issues, in addition to the general point about Canadian leverage, helped to frame the discussion:

- Effective foreign policy development needs to include and build on a critique of current Canadian practice and existing policies;

- Indigenous peoples in Canada and in Asia must be at the table in policy discussions to speak on their own behalf (the circumpolar Arctic Council offers a model of a forum for international indigenous discourse that ought to be kept in mind in the context of the Asia/Pacific);
- Exchanges and linkages between Canada and the region, including especially at the people-to-people level, need to be increased;
- To enhance its influence and leverage, Canada needs to strengthen its "on-the-ground" representation in the region (at the governmental, non-governmental, and commercial levels);
- The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Human Rights Charter offers an important occasion to promote human rights in the region;
- Multilateralism will continue to be the preferred vehicle for Canadian diplomatic intervention in the region, but it cannot be assumed that the European experience will provide the model.

Participants expressed the concern that while there is a formal commitment to promoting human rights in the context of efforts to expand trade and economic opportunity, there is a perceived imbalance in the level of funds respectively committed to human rights and trade promotion. Funding for overseas development assistance and for development education have been severely cut, undermining CIDA's capacity to support good governance initiatives and to strengthen civil society, both key elements in human rights work.

This concern reflected a broader view that while current foreign policy is committed to promoting "Canadian values" — including basic values such as human rights, democracy, press freedom, environmental protection and the peaceful settlement of disputes — funding cuts have disproportionately affected the very international programs and institutions that can help carry such values into the international community. Cutbacks in Canadian funding support for the UNHCR and the Human Rights Commission, for example, while trade promotion appears to be given priority political attention, challenge the current rhetorical commitment to peacebuilding and a values-based foreign policy.

One of the implications of diminished concrete commitment to "values" issues is that attention to such concerns is downloaded to the NGO community. Increasingly, NGOs are asked to not only give leadership but to assume primary programmatic responsibility for promoting Canadian concerns related to values

such as gender equity, democratic governance, human rights education, and so on. If such values are central to Canadian foreign policy they need to be assigned priority political attention and significant economic resources.

The organizers of the Waterloo form place a high priority on encouraging participation from the business community. In the end, while there was welcome and active participation from the business community, the sector was again significantly under-represented. It is a pattern that is unlikely to change without a change in the way in which efforts are made to engage the business sector. The business community does not routinely participate in multi-sector policy conferences and dialogues (unlike the academic and NGO sectors for which such events are a normal feature of their work), and it is unlikely to become extensively involved in response to routine invitations to conferences. The process of consultation in foreign policy development will have to devote specific resources to meeting with the business sector to seek their prior input in agenda setting, and more generally, to build an atmosphere of engagement and confidence that involvement in the process is worthwhile.

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Extensive discussion of Canada's relations with the Asia-Pacific region occurred in the theme areas of the five working groups. Summary reports of the working groups follow, with the discussion of each theme area divided into the policy context and policy options for the Canadian government.

## Indigenous peoples, minorities and refugees

Group discussion was devoted mainly to the two topics of indigenous peoples and refugees.

### Policy context

#### A: Indigenous peoples

1. Indigenous peoples can and need to speak for themselves and should be provided with the *voice space* to do so. This applies to indigenous peoples in Canada and Asia-Pacific, recognizing that the situation in the latter region is complicated by other categorizations such as minorities, and tribal and other communal designations. Indigenous peoples are pursuing North-South and Canada-Asia-Pacific links, dialogues and activities.
2. Indigenous peoples are adversely affected by non-sustainable economic development such as resource extraction. Indigenous peoples can and do conduct business, but their models for *sustainable development*, which have much to offer, must be acknowledged. In the area of health, there is some recognition of the sciences and knowledge of indigenous and Asian peoples.
3. The Western-based, UN "individual" rights framework is being challenged by Asian and indigenous peoples. An indigenous peoples *framework of collective rights*, which requires responsibilities and benefits for individuals, offers a model that can avoid the dichotomy of Asian collective rights and Western individual rights. Also, Canada has in its indigenous peoples an untapped resource to more constructively engage Asia-Pacific nations in such basic areas as diplomatic practices.
4. Although Canada has the benefit of diversity in ideas, geography and ethnicity, Canada's *credibility* on indigenous peoples issues has suffered since the release of the recent Aboriginal Report.

#### B: Refugees

1. The end of the Cold War has not changed the causes of *refugee crises*: they will continue and new ones will appear.

2. Canada has demonstrated a capacity to give *leadership* in refugee crises (as demonstrated in Rwanda), as well as in related areas such as peacebuilding.

3. The only effective *solutions* for managing and ending refugee crises *will be multilateral and multisectoral*. Government co-operation with NGOs has been an important component of international response to refugee crises. However, the UNHCR, a central multilateral agency, does not have permanent funding: its existence must be renewed every five years.

## Policy options for the Canadian government

### A: Indigenous Peoples

1. Within APEC:

(a) Promote and broaden civil society participation in APEC meetings, especially greater participation of indigenous peoples.

(b) Promote a forum on indigenous peoples issues.

2. Promote "participatory" research on indigenous peoples, that is, conduct research with the participation of indigenous peoples. Pursue shared learning regarding health in particular through cooperative measures.

3. Support more diversified exchanges between and among indigenous and non-indigenous peoples from Canada and Asia-Pacific. Pursue broader sectoral or grassroots dialogue and participation by supporting NGOs in their work with grassroots and other contacts.

4. Ratify the Convention on Biodiversity in Montreal with attention to article 8(J) that will provide a framework to deal with indigenous peoples issues.

5. Build a policy capacity by creating and sustaining a critical mass of indigenous peoples and experts to provide the necessary skills, knowledge and options for policy development.

6. Include the following elements in a "code of conduct" vis-a-vis aboriginal peoples:

(a) Greater promotion of and education about indigenous peoples, including

educational resources that relay cultural viewpoints, practices and lifestyles.

(b) Equity and fairness in cultural context, to allow diversity and to preserve indigenous peoples cultural context within "globalization."

(c) Creation of "voice space" for indigenous peoples to speak on their own behalf with business.

### **B: Refugees**

1. Continue to demonstrate leadership and expertise in refugee response.
2. Fulfil obligations to international conventions on refugees and ratify the International Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers.
3. Promote the entrenching of a permanent UNHCR with adequate funding.
4. Pursue preventive diplomacy instruments to prevent refugee crises and multilaterally develop Early Warning Systems to facilitate early response when they occur.
5. Continue to cooperate and coordinate with NGOs to ensure maximum effectiveness.

## Human Rights and Trade

### Policy context

1. Although it is generally acknowledged that Canada should support good human rights practices in countries with which it has trade and investment relations, there are *immediate questions* that complicate policy development. These include: what are core human rights, or core labour standards? How do we define collective rights as distinct from individual rights?
2. There are variations in views and positions on the roles of capital and government in relation to human rights. Nevertheless, we can seek steps to introduce some measure of *accountability* of both corporations and government to the public that will enhance human rights compliance. The current interest in codes and labels reflects this search for accountability mechanisms.
3. Can Canadian companies *project Canadian values* if we cannot define a Canadian company? For example, in the mining sector some "Canadian" companies active internationally have no exploration or production in Canada.
4. If the Canadian government is to exert *greater influence* in international human rights, some say it needs to examine strategies to avoid charges of extra-territoriality or cultural imperialism. Others suggest that such charges come primarily from governments, not from the people whose rights they repress.
5. By assuming that capital, rather than government, provides the primary channel for influencing human rights, we are acquiescing in the "withering away of the state," and allowing the state to *download responsibilities*. The Canadian government has been unwilling to link economic relations with human rights concerns, even in situations of the most blatant abuse, such as Indonesia.
6. *Canada's presence in Asia* should not be overrated. For example, Canada's share of exports to the region is slipping. Yet, the ability of the government to influence Asian governments should not be underrated. Canada has persuaded Malaysia and Indonesia to support a UN forestry convention, for example.
7. The issue of *transparency* in the use of resources and financial management

(including by the military) is being discussed in multilateral forums like the World Bank and OECD. Canada could support greater international transparency by domestic action, including criminalization of bribery for tax deduction purposes.

8. Canada does not have to choose between constructive engagement and sanctions, but could employ a *continuum of measures* that negotiate desired human rights outcomes through incentives and penalties in aid, trade and investment relations.

9. With respect to trade *codes of conduct*, rights questions, and questions of sustainable development are being raised more frequently by companies themselves. Corruption and repressive, yet unstable, governments provide an unpredictable context for investment.

While general and global codes of conduct for human rights and community relations appear to be of limited usefulness, environmental codes, and codes for "ethical" employee behaviour are more easily applied globally. Some encourage country-specific and sector-specific codes for relations with governments and communities. A recent report by the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development reviews a broad range of types of codes, and makes recommendations regarding effectiveness of codes. Some suggest that corporate access to government programs (e.g. the EDC, PEMD and CIDA) should be linked to code requirements.

10. Human rights and labour issues are *interests shared* by Canadian and Asia-Pacific groups and linkages should be encouraged and supported including between business groups and NGOs.

11. In the near future Canada has opportunities for *multilateral action* regarding human rights concerns. Beyond the APEC forum in Vancouver in November, these include the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in December and the current negotiations of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI).

### Policy options for the Canadian government

1. Maintain and reinforce commitment to the UN system of universal human rights protection, and use the 50th anniversary of the UN Human Rights

Declaration to encourage Asia-Pacific region affirmation of these principles. Use other multilateral instruments of the UN and ILO to full advantage.

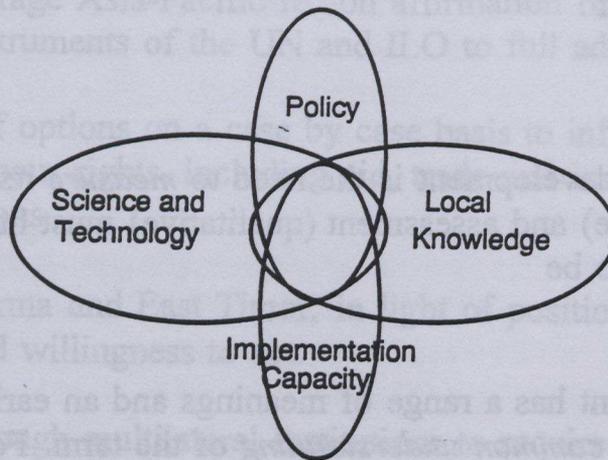
2. Employ a range of options on a case by case basis to influence compliance with human rights/labour rights, including aid, trade and investment-related incentives and sanctions.
3. In the cases of Burma and East Timor, in light of positions taken by the UN, demonstrate increased willingness to act.
4. Support efforts through multilateral institutions to require transparency in financial arrangements and budgets, so as to reduce corruption and the hidden military expenditures which often support human rights abuse.
5. Ask APEC to mandate Canada to host a meeting of Asia-Pacific parliamentarians, early in 1998, to discuss issues of human rights and sustainable development.
6. Facilitate informed public discussion of the proposed Multilateral Agreement on Investment and its impact on labour and human rights.
7. Support the strengthening of linkages between Canadian organizations and groups and those in Asia-Pacific countries working for the protection of labour rights and human rights.
8. Regarding codes of conduct, two conflicting options are:
  - (A) leave the development of codes to the private sector, or
  - (B) at a minimum, develop criteria for effective codes of conduct such as the involvement of stakeholders in their development, transparent administration, and independent auditing of performance.
9. Host business forums to encourage Canadian companies to adopt existing positive human rights practices or codes.

## Sustainable development

### Policy context

1. A key issue of policy development is the need to *measure* its success. Measurement (quantitative) and assessment (qualitative) must have standards. Policies need indicators to be implementable.
2. Sustainable development has a range of meanings and an early policy challenge is to develop a *common understanding* of the term. For some, ecological sustainability outweighs all other aspects of sustainable development. Others place human needs first, noting that the needs of people should be connected with all other aspects of sustainability. A policy on sustainable development also will need to consider socio-cultural components in conjunction with ecological and economic components.
3. Canadians need to *critique* the aspects and activities in *our own culture* which can be counter-productive to our perception of sustainability. For example, any developed policy will need to make a stated commitment to reducing Canadian consumption levels. Consumption also needs to relate to equity, nationally and internationally.
4. The critique of culture needs to coincide with a *review and redefinition of Canadian values*. The projection of Canadian values as defined in the government statement, *Canada in the World*, (p.10) is meaningless unless these values are clearly defined and understood, a difficult task given Canada's short history. Moreover, value definitions need to be very concrete and explicit for results to be identifiable and measurable. In addition, the government statement's key objective on prosperity is antithetical to sustainability.
5. Regarding the *process of developing policy*, participatory approaches can sometimes be an excuse for restricted terms of reference or for lack of government accountability. There also could be greater attention to de-institutionalizing the process by using alternative methods of policy development (e.g. NGOs working with NGOs). And policy development processes need to "speed up" to match the pace of current information exchange.

6. The following "flower" image illustrates how structures and policies affect behaviour in communities. It represents the necessary interaction of local knowledge, science and technology, implementation capacity, and policy.



7. Sustainable development policy will need to address the government's role in *holding transnational corporations accountable*. Although some argue that the government has little power over transnationals, others note the potential to do so through bodies like the United Nations.

### Policy options for the Canadian government

1. Develop Sustainable Development policy from the following principles:
  - (A) Accountability based on assessment, indicators (e.g.. food security), and qualitative and quantitative measures, and the engagement of Canadians in policy development and measurement.
  - (B) Use of different policies and evolving policies which take into account differences in world communities (i.e. social/cultural).
  - (C) Critical evaluation of Canada's practices/policies and a commitment to ecological and socially responsible consumption (with equity in mind).
  - (D) Inclusion of account policies, local knowledge, science and technology, and implementation capacity (see flower model).
  - (E) Recognition of the following elements of sustainable development: common security, ecological and social and economic well-being, temporal body, and an ecological imperative.
2. Review all Canadian policies and international agreements for their contribution to human and ecological security and sustainability.

3. Review all international agreements which relate to or impact on sustainability to ensure accountability by Canada.
4. Identify and define Canadian values which reflect our commitment to, and the necessity for, global sustainability.
5. State that Canada recognizes and asserts its responsibility for holding transnational corporations accountable for their impact on sustainable development (e.g. through the UN).

## Media and Communications

### Policy context

1. When formulating and implementing policy, Canada needs to be sensitive to the fact that many Asia-Pacific countries are experiencing the pains and dynamic changes associated with *nation-building*, in less time than it took North America and Western Europe.
2. Canada should take advantage of the tremendous opportunities that exist for it to develop a unique partnership with these countries based on *cultural sensitivity and mutual respect*. Not only could this prove to be a more effective method of achieving freedom of expression ideals in the region, but also a chance for Canada to cultivate an identity distinct from its American cousins and raise its profile.
3. Canadian domestic and foreign policy should strive to support the *free expression* of ideas and openness of the media and communications among all peoples. However, there are important cultural and philosophical differences between Western and Eastern cultures that affect interpretation of free expression. Concepts such as free press, democracy and good governance, as understood in a Western context, could differ from the Eastern exercise of these terms.
4. Canada should not be aggressive in its efforts to foster freedom of expression and media openness in Asia-Pacific, particularly given its own weakness in the areas of human rights (i.e. indigenous rights) and concentrated media ownership. Rather than imposing a "Canadian model of conduct," Canada should pursue a

"quiet diplomacy" approach.

5. *Communications technology is a tool* and totalitarian governments, for example, will attempt to control media and internet filtering software. The quiet diplomacy approach can affect attitude change at the top and empower peoples to pressure for change from below. The technology involved needs to be appropriate to the goals.

6. Before formulating policy, a number of *hard questions* need to be asked. For example, if we truly support and are proud of our multicultural environment, why does mainstream media still largely convey images of white people and their cultural values? Where are the highly-skilled, competent, motivated immigrants that we invite into Canada in the public policy apparatus? Should we expect Asia-Pacific countries to encourage and allow subversive, alternative media when our own press is largely mainstream in content and style?

7. Response to these questions suggests the adoption of a "*development approach*" which focuses on the collaboration with local peoples when determining needs, formulating policy and offering assistance.

8. Regarding larger foreign policy goals, if some of the strategy's aims are to promote *Canadian values* and raise the international community's awareness of what Canada has to offer, should the Canadian government be performing this function or would the private-sector be more appropriate? If a key objective is to promote Canadian values, how do we define them?

9. The role of the Internet in projecting Canadian "*soft power*" (the promotion of persuasive ideas through the use and control of information technologies) raises some key concerns that caution against its central use in Canadian media and communications policy. These include:

(A) affordability and accessibility of the Internet to poor, local and rural peoples in the East and West. Not even many "ordinary" Canadian citizens have access to the Internet due to their socio-economic status and resource constraints.

(B) consequences of Internet ownership and corporate monopolization of information, drawing upon the examples of corporate concentration in Canada's newspaper industry, as well as in broadcasting in Europe and Asia.

(C) regulation and monitoring of the accuracy of information and authorship on the Internet.

10. Canada's international *communications strategy* requires further exploration and discussion.

A Canadian "CNN-equivalent" broadcasting system, for example, would be an extremely expensive proposition and not necessarily the most effective way of raising Canada's profile abroad, given the increasing competitiveness in the international broadcasting market and Canada's minor player status in the global arena.

### **Policy options for the Canadian government**

1. Maintain a quiet diplomacy approach to free media, but in some situations, such as the persecution of journalists, be more active and vocal, both diplomatically and/or through the NGO community. Building upon Canada's historical coalition-building role, collaborate with like-minded countries to pressure nations that severely restrict the free flow of communication and information.

2. Invest Radio Canada International with the appropriate resources to act as a credible global communications vehicle committed to raising Canada's profile abroad through the provision of quality Canadian programming and international news.

3. Focus Canadian expertise and efforts on smaller projects where policy would have the most impact. Assist with the development of media infrastructure at the grass roots level by:

(A) fostering linkages between journalists and professional journalism organizations at the local, national and international levels.

(B) providing communities with appropriate equipment and training, to build a sense of empowerment at the local level. (In the Philippines, the Tambuli Community Radio Project with its "Village on the Air" program is an example.)

(C) seeking to expand and build upon situations that have proven mutually beneficial for the community and donors (for example, a Canadian-funded video camera used by the small public health unit in the city of Rafah, in the the Gaza Strip).

4. Promote greater multi-sectoral interaction among journalists in Asia-Pacific, and those in the legal community, academics, government officials, multilateral organizations and people at the local community level.

5. Support journalism training programs that foster responsible reporting practices, and/or workshops targeting government and legal experts regarding laws on libel, contempt and freedom of the press.

## Conflict and security

### Policy context

1. When thinking of matters of conflict, Canadians "should pinch ourselves each morning" to appreciate the limits of our abilities to alter the course of others' events. In Asia-Pacific, Canada has *little room to be pro-active*, but this does not mean that Canada has no choices to make about matters where Canada has little influence. For example, we have choices to make regarding exports of military equipment to states in Asia-Pacific.
2. The conflicts, distributions of might and prospects for regional diplomacy in Asia-Pacific differ significantly from other regions. Indeed, perhaps it is a mistake to consider Asia-Pacific a "region" at all. Asia-Pacific is a *huge, diverse geographical space* occupied by peoples of many profound and durable civilizations and by governments of many nation-states. Canada's approach should be more issue-oriented, less regionally oriented. The landmine initiative is a fine example of such "niche diplomacy."
3. With what means/issues might Canada have *more success* than others? They include facilitation and participation in multilateral security dialogues and participation in the United Nations as the international organization of choice. Yet, security relationships such as the those between the United States, Japan and China are matters of deep concern to Canada but are decided without reference to Canada. So also will the longer-term outcomes of momentous economic changes in China.
4. The Canadian government may find it useful to use the phrase "human security" in place of "human rights" in some contexts because the latter meets resistance from those governments which repress individual freedoms. Some think that such re-definition will thereby yield more influence in securing individual freedom, but opinions vary on the political effectiveness in Asia-Pacific of this change in vocabulary. Once we *expand the notion of security*

beyond matters involving inter-state or intra-state conflict and the threat or use of armed force there is no obvious place to stop. Moreover, with the expansive notion, our goals enlarge while our resources do not. Nevertheless, we should have some explicit and general notion with which to evaluate what is done to people in the name of conventional security, for example, the use of military equipment for repression in Asia-Pacific.

5. The *threat* to the safety of some people *from the state* complicates our discussions and policy proposals to increase human security. Some argue that the state becomes less of a threat to human security with economic growth: economic growth leads to expansion of middle classes and middle classes advance democracy. However, sometimes the economy does well but large numbers of the people do poorly. Then such imbalanced "prosperity" is a threat to human security.

6. Understanding the notion of human security less in terms of the "freedom to" (as in human rights advocacy) and more in terms of "freedom from" (as in freedom from poverty) is a step forward in some eyes. This is akin to a shift from "the diversity of happiness," where many quite properly differ regarding the good life, to the "unity of misery": people can agree regarding the *basic bads*. Torture is a "basic bad," for example. How loudly Canada's government should speak depends upon the circumstances. Quiet diplomacy might be effective.

7. Canada's military security circumstances are unique and highly favourable. We have no enemy nearby. Would professing "de-militarization" to those in far less favourable positions advance our values? Substituting "*military restraint*" for "de-militarization" could be more effective.

8. "Human security" can put important tasks in the hands of *non-governmental actors*. Current CIDA programs for schooling, disease prevention and micro-banking are matters of security. Some would argue that such programs "get at the root causes of war." Others would not; such programs simply reduce misery and advance human security.

9. Care should be taken so that NGOs are not seen to be agents of the Canadian government as they are in some countries. Whatever the abstract discussions of sovereignty, states are sensitive to interference in domestic politics by

others—states or IGOs or NGOs. Nevertheless, Canada should encourage “*track three*” or “people-to-people” exchanges and discussions. We will learn more and we should learn more.

### Policy options for the Canadian government

1. Promote people-to-people linkages with the Asia-Pacific so that Canadians can learn more of Asia-Pacific states and societies to appreciate and to effectively evaluate the art of the possible in promoting security in the region.
2. To be effective, act with other states in pursuit of security objectives in the region. Since Canada has earned a fine reputation in advancing multilateral diplomacy elsewhere, encourage multilateral activities in Asia-Pacific.
3. Because the promotion of democracy and human rights requires a presence, raise the diplomatic profile in Myanmar/Burma in support of our concerns regarding the actions of the dictatorship. Multilateral diplomacy must include our visible presence alongside other diplomats in favour of democratic politics and politicians such as Aung San Suu Kyi and her supporters.
4. Given that “human security” is the goal, seek out means of talking directly with, and gathering advice from, people in jeopardy from the state without placing them in further danger.
5. Continue to speak and act against torture committed by governments in Asia-Pacific and elsewhere.
6. In matters of military objectives, expenditures, and equipment, encourage transparency.
7. Encourage “track three” or “people-to-people” exchanges and discussions among students and other academics, military personnel, and diplomatic personnel. Also, expand the range of governmental and non-governmental “players” with whom contacts are made.

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1997 NATIONAL FORUM  
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13-14 JULY 1997  
HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, CANADA

DRAFT REPORT

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The local organizing committee decided to add a maritime dimension to this broad topic, as a logical link for the Atlantic Canadian region to the distant shores of the Asia-Pacific. Hence the sub-title of the Forum was "Ocean Links to the Asia-Pacific". This was reflected in the participation from a broad range of "oceans" sectors in the Forum. However, there was also an interesting range of participants from "shore-based" civil society, including business, NGOs, academics and educators, youth, media and government. Most participants were from Atlantic Canada, but others came from across Canada, and some from the Asia-Pacific region.

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The Forum was opened by an overview of current and future political, economic and security issues in Asia-Pacific by Johan Samavaraman, the Chair in ASEAN and International Studies at the University of Toronto. This was followed the next day by presentations by resource persons for each of the three working groups: Pierre Liase (McGill-Universite de Montreal/Brock) on Security and Stability; Chris Musial (International Language Institute - Halifax) on Human Resource Development and Capacity Building, and Ross Pierney (Nova Scotia Ocean Initiative) on Trade and Industry. These four speakers provided interesting insights into the Asia-Pacific and Canada's relations with the region.

The three working groups dealt with the same issues identified in the National Forum discussion paper by John Hay, and addressed by the Victoria and Waterloo Forum: sustainable development, human rights, freedom of the media, and corporate codes of conduct. As with the Waterloo Forum, security issues were given prominent consideration. The Ocean Link theme was reflected in some of the questions posed to the different working groups.

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At the end of the day, rapporteurs from the three working groups made brief

presentations to the Plenary session, which was followed by a brief discussion and wrap-up by Steve Lee, Director of the Centre for Foreign Policy Development.

### Security and Stability Working Group

#### Overview

The working group began with a discussion about the term "security" - defined generally as the freedom from threat. It was agreed that the traditional foreign policy focus on the purely military aspects of "security" must be broadened to include the concept of "stability", and that this widening notion of security is accepted by many throughout the world, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region.

It was suggested that the most productive way in which security/stability can be viewed is through a tiered system of classification. At the primary level, maintenance of the inherent rights of the individual are basic to human security/stability. It was pointed out, however, that each society views individual rights differently. The second level of security is that of the "unit" or the state. At this level, the traditional military connotation has been prevalent.

The last level of security discussed was regional/collective. While some of the group felt that internal stability within a state was essential for the general security of the region, others argued that only when traditional military threats to regions disappear can a nation-state focus on human security in the broader sense.

The issue of Canadian values and the influence which these should have on relations with other nation-states was discussed. It was pointed out by members of the group that the renewed emphasis by the Canadian Government on the need to project Canadian values in foreign policy can be overstated, as these same values have always guided policy and, until now, their existence was not questioned. Canadians do not have a monopoly on democratic values. In practice, the Canadian Government does not talk in terms of values but in terms of a policy dialogue in which emphasis is placed on such things as stability through income distribution, etc.

#### *Observations and Recommendations*

*1. What are the key security issues which Canadian foreign policy should be addressing in the region? How? Are there key regions/countries where Canada should focus its efforts in terms of security concerns?*

#### *Observations*

Canadian foreign policy should identify Canada's security interests in Asia-Pacific as "a secure and stable environment, subject to the rule of law and characterised by sustainable development". Sustainable development should include encouraging "responsible prosperity" which involves attention to issues as diverse as pay equity and the development and enforcement of child labour laws.

In many ways, Canada needs Asia-Pacific more than Asia-Pacific needs Canada. Nonetheless, Canada has unique capabilities with which it can contribute to the common good of the region. These include: its official bilingualism; its interlocking links with bodies like the Commonwealth, la Francophonie, the OAS, etc.; its multicultural makeup (including some two million citizens of Asian descent); its non-colonial background; its technological capabilities; and its experience in peacekeeping and confidence-building.

Although no nation would overtly deny the virtues of moderation, tolerance and respect for the rule of law, Canada has been particularly successful (so far) in reflecting those values. While Canada does not have a monopoly on ethics and values, a national commitment to such values sets an example, encourages others and provides a publicly stated standard upon which to base official Canadian response to unsavory actions in less democratic members of the Asia-Pacific community.

### *Recommendations*

1. From the perspective of foreign policy development, the group felt that a more appropriate question would be "What are Canada's key security interests?" There was general consensus that, given the present foreign policy priorities of prosperity, security and justice, it is in Canada's interest that the Asia-Pacific region enjoy stability and security, with the caveats that security and stability are not isolated ends in themselves. They must not be achieved at the cost of fundamental human rights or the health of the people and environment of the region.

2. Canadian foreign policy should exploit fully the unique capabilities which Canada's bilingual and multicultural heritage can contribute to the common good of the Asia-Pacific community."

3. Canadian foreign policy should clearly express Canada's perception of its national values, so that the basis of this nation's stance on controversial political events is clearly understood by all concerned. "Moderation, tolerance and respect for the rule of law" is not a bad formula and should be acceptable to all statesmanlike members of the Canadian political spectrum, regardless of who is in power.

4. At any given time, focus on particular areas or issues is inevitable. Nonetheless, international affairs are intrinsically unpredictable. Attention must therefore never become so focused on one area or issue that critical and significant events elsewhere create an unexpected crisis for which Canada is neither equipped nor prepared to address.

*II. Does a broader definition of security (cooperative and/or human security - which could include environmental threats, human rights, refugees, crime, disease, as well as traditional security concerns) offer more opportunities for Canadian input and influence in the region?*

### *Observations*

In principle, a broader definition of security is appropriate. In practice however, broad definitions must be broken down into constituent parts for practical implementation. The three levels of security (individual, unit, collective) must be recognized. Nonetheless, broad concepts such as "cooperative security" and "human security" are useful frameworks upon which to construct national security policy, but are too broad for implementation at an operational level.

### *Recommendation*

**5. The building-block nature of broad foreign policy concepts must be clearly defined in order to provide the source of policy and doctrine within implementing Departments such as National Defence (the Canadian Forces), Fisheries and Oceans (the Canadian Coast Guard) etc.**

*III. Should Canada focus on multilateral or bilateral security building approaches in the Asia-Pacific? Should Canada "engage" the armed forces and governments of non-"like-minded states" in the region through training and exchange programs, etc. or follow a policy of exclusion and sanctions?*

### *Observations*

It was suggested that Canada should use a strategy in support of transitional concepts between bilateral and multilateral security building approaches. This can be achieved through an analysis of the relationships between the tiered levels of security and stability. Although much is made of a lack of multilateral tradition in Asia, embryonic multilateral relationships do exist. It was also pointed out that multilateral approaches have only been firmly entrenched in the Euro-North Atlantic region since the end of World War II.

Although sanctions may sometimes be appropriate with non-"like-minded states", there is always value in maintaining dialogue with those whose fingers are on the trigger, in order to avoid inadvertent escalation or crisis. Such dialogue can be achieved without expressing either endorsement of, or indifference to, areas of disagreement. It may not, for example, be appropriate to invite officers from a non-"like-minded" state to attend the Canadian Forces Command and Staff College, but there is no political endorsement inferred in inviting them to non-governmental institutions and conferences in Canada. From an Atlantic "Ocean Links" perspective, three good examples of recent events held in the region which could be used in this way are the annual "Maritime Dimension of Peacekeeping" course at the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, the May "Strategic Importance of International Shipping" conference at Dalhousie and the recent "Maritime Safety Colloquium" for Middle East mariners at the Canadian Coast Guard College.

### *Recommendations*

6. Canadian foreign policy should pursue both bilateral and multilateral approaches, as appropriate and most effective in the specific circumstances.

7. In order to maintain military dialogue with non-"like minded" states, middle- and senior rank officers should be invited to participate in fora dealing with peace, humanitarian and safety issues.

*IV. Should Canadian efforts in promoting security goals in the region be concentrated on Track One (inter-governmental), Track Two ("corridor" diplomacy), or Track Three (NGO/academic) approaches?*

### *Observations*

Discussion revealed that definitions of Tracks 1, 2, and 3 are not universally accepted. Nonetheless, all three forms of dialogue and interaction are valuable, some more than others in particular circumstances or particular times. It is imperative that the lines of communication between these tracks be maintained at all times as their goals and priorities often overlap.

### *Recommendation*

8. Canadian foreign policy should define Canada's interpretation of these concepts and identify them all as useful elements of the stability and security tool box.

*V. How can Canadian foreign policy initiatives reflect the importance of the maritime dimension of security issues in the region? Is there a particular role for Canada's maritime sector (Government departments such as DND, DFO, Coast Guard, etc. as well as private sector and NGOs) in promoting security and stability in the Asia-Pacific?*

### *Recommendation*

9. There are definitely roles for the maritime sector in security dialogue and confidence-building, either as specific security activities or through the inter-relationships developed through the pursuit of sustainable development or of humanitarian/safety collaboration such as Search and Rescue, safety of marine navigation or marine communications. Specific initiatives can, and should, be identified for the Government maritime community as follows:

(a) DND/Maritime Command - the classic and well established diplomatic and military role of navies

(b) DFO/Canadian Coast Guard:

i) Development - such as existing CCG assistance in developing Search and Rescue and Vessel Traffic Services systems overseas and

ii) Confidence-building - by engaging maritime security officials, both



## Human Resource Development/Capacity Building Working Group

### *Observations and Recommendations*

*1. Should protection of human rights in the Asia-Pacific region be a goal for Canada? What is the best strategy and what would be the role for business, government and NGOs in promoting human rights?*

#### *Observations*

The group discussed broad categories of Canadian values that should be promoted internationally, and agreed that protection of human rights is a fundamental goal which we should support, both in the Asia-Pacific region and more generally. It was noted that a strategy to promote human rights needs to be culturally sensitive. Canadian policies and values are often good, but the strategy to implement them has been ineffective (e.g., women and development). Further, it was noted that cultures are not static and this needs to be reflected in our strategies.

#### *Recommendations*

- 1. Canadian officials should facilitate the use of informal organizations to promote human rights internationally. Involvement of civil society at the grass roots level is important.**
- 2. Canada can facilitate discussion and the cooperative exchange of information on human rights issues internationally.**
- 3. The issue of the role of business in the promotion of human rights needs to be examined. There is no guarantee that company ethics will mirror the values of the Canadian public or government. There should be instruments put in place to encourage businesses to work in partnership with NGOs and communities (e.g., joint development of codes of conduct).**
- 4. Points of interventions should be targeted to maximize influence and use of limited human and financial resources.**
- 5. Official Development Assistance funds should be increased, including monies allocated to non-governmental organizations - i.e., support for civil society in Canada and the Asia-Pacific region. Reduction of poverty and improvement in living conditions will facilitate respect for human rights.**
- 6. The capacity of the education/training sector needs to be developed through partnerships in human resource development.**

*II. How can Canadians help indigenous peoples find a voice and role in the Asia-Pacific? Is this an appropriate or credible foreign policy objective considering Canada's history and experience with its own indigenous people?*

### **Observations**

The discussion on the role of indigenous peoples revolved around the role that Canada could play internationally as well as the role which indigenous peoples could play in the policy-making process. It was agreed that indigenous peoples have common interests in Canada and in the Asia-Pacific region (e.g., protection of ancestral lands, balancing development with environmental protection, legal rights).

### **Recommendations**

**7. Canada can facilitate the involvement of indigenous peoples to have a voice both in Canada and in Asia-Pacific through technology linkages which would encourage a dialogue between indigenous peoples with mutual interests.**

**8. Canada should take a leadership role in the development of initiatives in support of and supported by indigenous peoples at both the community and international levels (e.g., the UN Forum for Indigenous Peoples).**

**9. The government must ensure that indigenous peoples have a role in the policy-making process. Despite Canada's poor record with its own indigenous peoples, we should encourage such policy initiatives. We recognize that we have a lot to learn from others.**

*III. Should Canadians promote freedom of the media in the Asia-Pacific region? How? Can Canada help to develop communications/media capacity? Is there a role for institutions like Radio Canada International, or private sector or NGO initiatives, education, training, exchanges, etc. and who should take the lead?*

### **Recommendations**

**10. Canada should promote freedom of the media in the Asia-Pacific region, and elsewhere, and take a stand when media rights are being violated. This was seen as a human rights/value issue.**

**11. Canada can take the initiative to encourage the foreign media to visit Canada and to work with the Canadian media and with Canadian journalists by offering fellowships supported by the media (including Conrad Black, RCI and CBC) . It was recognized that there is a language barrier, but it was thought that Asian journalists might be able to adapt some techniques to their local situation.**

12. Canada should promote and facilitate the use of other information technologies (e.g., Internet, local radio and television in Asia-Pacific).

13. Radio Canada International has an important role to play in promoting Canada in the Asia-Pacific region and its support must be continued.

*IV. Is there a particular role for Canada's maritime sector in human resource development and capacity building in the Asia-Pacific region?*

#### **Observations**

The discussion revolved around the fact that the marine environment has no boundaries. For example, Arctic marine pollution is the result of activities in Asia and southern North America. Canada can take the lead in international fora to influence policies in Southeast Asia since we have proven capabilities in marine environmental technologies, policies, and education and training. A substantial number of educational linkages and training opportunities already exist in the region and these should continue to be supported and encouraged to expand.

#### **Recommendations**

14. The Canadian government should recognize that training and education in the international context is the gateway to the transfer of technology and other opportunities.

15. Further, there is a natural linkage between the people in the coastal communities in Canada and Southeast Asia, including indigenous peoples. Canada should recognize that technology and aquaculture are not the "cure all" for the world-wide crisis in fisheries.

*V. Key Issues in Human Resources Development/Capacity Building*

#### **Observations**

The discussion revolved around identifying skills-specific training and long-term education (both formal and non-formal) opportunities for Canadian institutions. It was agreed that it is critical that Canadians receive education in international thinking/internationalization and that assistance should be provided to communities to explore the resources available to them locally (through NGOs) to support this goal. Opportunities to share our knowledge with partners in the Asia-Pacific region were identified including distance and continuing education (for teachers/trainers as well as students) and the twinning of educational institutions.

#### **Recommendations**

16. It was agreed that youth participation (both internationally and in Canada) in

developing policy must be ensured.

17. Recruitment to Canadian universities must be promoted aggressively in the Asia-Pacific region through federal-provincial cooperation. Increased funding for scholarships in Canada must be made available. Visa procedures for students coming to study in Canada must be streamlined.

18. It was agreed that the complex issue of child labour requires creative development initiatives. One strategy Canada could utilize is that of ensuring that the fair wage standards of the International Labour Organization are enforced.

The discussion revolved around the fact that the marine environment has no boundaries... Arctic marine pollution is the result of activities in Asia and southern North America... Canada can take the lead in international efforts to influence policy in Asia and southern North America... since waterways connect continents... Canada should take a leadership role in the development of initiatives to support and... and supported by indigenous peoples... (e.g., the UN Forum for Indigenous Peoples).

14. The Canadian government should recognize that training and education in the... making process... We envision a... 15. Further, there is a natural linkage between the people in the coastal communities in... Canada and Southeast Asia, including indigenous peoples... Canada should recognize that... technology and... 16. As... exchanges...

Recommendations

19. Canada... 20. Canada... It was agreed that youth participation (both internationally and in Canada) is...

## Trade and Industry Working Group

### Overview

The Trade and Industry Working Group was given the task of discussing and formulating policy options and recommendations for trade and industry in the context of Canada's foreign policy in the Asia-Pacific region. A series of questions was provided to the Working Group as guide for thinking and discussion. Five important issue areas were addressed in these questions: *corporate codes of conduct*; *corruption*; *trade and industry as an instrument of foreign policy*; *sustainable development*; and the *role of oceans trade and industry* in this context.

The issue of establishing and applying *corporate codes of conduct* to Canadian overseas trade and industry proved to be a problematic topic. It was agreed that this topic was impossible to address in the time allotted. Several concrete ideas and options were, however, developed by the Group. There was general agreement that codes of conduct - a framework of ethical protocol and best practice - are important in overseas trade, as well as industrial and economic activity. To promote this, it was suggested that the federal government move towards the application of codes of conduct to government-supported overseas activity. Two specific policy options for the government in the formulation and acceptance of codes of conduct were put forward. Both are founded in multistakeholder consultations, partnerships, education and outreach, and require action within Canada and abroad.

Major problems encountered in this discussion included the following:

- (i) the implications of imposing the Canadian value system on Asia-Pacific countries, specifically in the context of trade and industry;
  - (ii) the scale and content of codes of conduct— e.g., “broad” versus “issue specific”;
- and
- (iii) the effective enforcement and auditing of codes of conduct and overseas business practices.

In addressing the issue of *corruption* in overseas trade and industry, the importance of multilateral approaches was generally agreed to by the Group. The leadership role for Canada in international fora was also emphasized.

Discussion on the use of *trade and industry as an instrument of foreign policy* highlighted a number of problem areas. Issues of whether or not to trade with “non like-minded” countries (a problematic term in itself) are ultimately defined by the paradox of values versus interests, and how to achieve a balance between them. It was agreed, however, that Canada should continue to use trade and industry as part of its wide range of foreign policy tools to promote systems of law, trade, labour, human rights and sustainable development/environment. Once again, multilateral approaches and a leadership role for Canada were identified.

The application of principles and practices of *sustainable development* in economic activities was unanimously agreed. However, the extent to which Canada can or should pursue this in the Asia-Pacific region was questioned, particularly in light of environmental and

social problems at home. Sustainability was, therefore, emphasized to be equally important, if not more so, in Canada as in Canadian activities in the Asia-Pacific region. The perceptions of Asia-Pacific countries regarding “practice what you preach” and Canada’s motivations in pushing sustainable development in their region were discussed.

Finally, the Group looked at the possible *roles for oceans trade and industry* in Canadian foreign policy, both generally and within the Asia-Pacific region. It was emphasized that Canada, as one of the world’s foremost maritime nations, has a leadership role in international maritime affairs, including trade and industry. Canada’s oceans sector is well on its way to becoming a major source of export, and is well placed to enter the waters of the Asia-Pacific region. In addition, there appeared to be a general understanding that oceans trade and industry is an appropriate foreign policy tool for Canada, and well suited to the Asia-Pacific arena.

### ***Recommendations***

#### ***I. Corporate Codes of Conduct***

- 1. Appropriate corporate codes of conduct, based on agreed principles of best practice, should be applied to Canadian overseas trade and industry receiving federal government support.**
- 2. Government should facilitate multi-stakeholder consultations for the development of appropriate corporate codes of conduct for Canadian overseas trade and industry, based on contextual and sectoral factors.**
- 3. Government should facilitate a partnership approach to fostering awareness of appropriate codes of conduct and practice for Canadian overseas trade and industry, utilizing a range of educational tools. (e.g., business schools, media).**

#### ***II. Corruption Issues***

- 4. Canada should lead efforts in appropriate fora (e.g., the OECD) to obtain a multilateral agreement against corruption which should be implemented within the next two years. (e.g., based on the US Foreign Corruption Act).**

#### ***III. Trade and Industry as an Instrument of Foreign Policy***

- 5. Canada should continue to use a wide range of diplomatic tools, including those of trade, investment, development and culture, to promote the adoption of appropriate systems of law, trade, labour, human rights and sustainable development/environment.**
- 6. Canada should take a leading role in international fora to promote the adoption of appropriate systems of law, trade, labour, human rights and sustainable development/environment.**

#### *IV. Sustainable Development*

**7. All economic activity should be underpinned by the principles and practice of sustainability - both in Canada and in our activities overseas.**

#### *V. Role of Oceans Trade and Industry*

**8. Canada is a maritime country and should play a leadership role in international oceans governance, trade and industry.**

**9. Priority regions for Canadian oceans trade and industry, and the types of activity within those regions, should be identified. The Asia-Pacific region should be included as one of these.**

### Conclusions on the Process

After each group had made its presentation to the Plenary session, discussion turned to the ongoing National Forum process, and several suggestions were made:

1. It may be better to focus the working groups on one question rather than several.
2. Either more time should be allocated to the discussions, or fewer topics and questions should be addressed in a one-day session.
3. Having background material delivered to participants in advance was much appreciated.
4. There should be more "cross-fertilization" between working groups addressing overlapping issues (i.e., human rights, sustainable development, etc.).
5. More youth should be involved in the Forum.
6. The next Atlantic Region National Forum could be held outside Halifax/Nova Scotia, and several ideas were proposed - Antigonish, Prince Edward Island, Pugwash, Fredericton, Sydney, etc.

Dear Sir, Madam:

Further to the Victoria, Waterloo and Halifax forums, the Château Lat Beauport in Quebec City hosted the Forum on Canada's International Relations on August 14 and 15, 1997. Close to 60 participants representing NGOs, the media, academic and business communities and unions gathered to discuss Canadian foreign policy issues. In this, Canada's Year of Asia-Pacific, the forum focused on aspects of Canada's foreign policy pertaining to this region. Specifically, the discussion centred on sustainable development, freedom of the press and freedom of expression, human rights and the drafting of codes of ethics to govern business relations with Asia-Pacific.

### QUEBEC REPORT

A springboard for the discussion was the preparatory document written by international affairs reporter John Hay at the request of the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development, as well as the reports of previous forums and of the round tables organized by the Centre. For each of the four workshops, participants were guided in their work by a series of four questions. These questions appear at the beginning of each report.

During the course of forum discussions, participants drew on their experiences and expertise. They raised many issues, came up with many ideas relating to foreign policy and even formulated a number of recommendations for Minister Axworthy and his department. The forum was held in Quebec City and the report summarizing the discussions was drafted by MA students in international relations at Laval University. In particular, the report sets out the recommendations formulated by each workshop and we urge you to give them special consideration.

Yvesick Lamonde  
Quebec Coordinator  
Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development

Angèle Aubin  
Co-organizer

Marie-Claude Bouchard  
Co-organizer



## Workshop on Human Rights

### Questions

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Québec Coordinator  
Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development

Angèle Aubin  
Co-organizer

Marie-Claude Bouchard  
Co-organizer



## Workshop on Human Rights

### Questions

- a) Does Canada truly have a role to play in the field of basic human rights?
- b) In setting its strategy, should the Canadian government draw a distinction between individual, democratic and associative rights?
- c) How can diplomacy, commerce and a stronger civil society improve the outlook with respect to human rights?
- d) Is Canada capable of playing a role at the multilateral level with respect to the human rights issue in Asia-Pacific and does it have a responsibility to do so?

How can members of Canada's civil society -- NGOs, the private sector, universities and volunteer associations -- promote the development of and respect for human rights in Asian-Pacific societies?

Which policies should the Canadian government adopt to foster the development of and respect for human rights in Asian-Pacific societies?

### Summary of discussions

Workshop participants came up with several guidelines for the Government of Canada. Initially, they discussed the Canadian public's views on human rights. There appears to be a consensus in Canada on this issue, although it is quite an emotional subject. While the women's rights movement is well organized in Canada, the situation with respect to aboriginal rights is less certain. In spite of this fact, we do indeed have a role to play when it comes to fundamental rights. Given our experience and dynamic actions, we must remain resolute, particular in addressing the alarming situation of women's rights in Asia. Furthermore, Canada must take on a more clearly defined role and seek out initiatives other than the "track 2" approach that is now widely followed. A good starting point would be to try and answer the following strategic questions. What does the Asian region represent for Canada? People in Eastern and Western Canada have a vastly different understanding of Asia. What do we have to offer? Asia is a highly competitive region and we must target products, values and individuals. What objectives are we pursuing? Our goals are often too broad or too vague, despite the fact that sectors are interconnected. Lastly, what special initiatives should be undertaken to achieve these objectives? If we have a role to play as a medium-weight economic power, who are our allies?

Workshop participants then proceeded to discuss cultural concerns and whether or not it was possible to distinguish between different kinds of rights. The consensus was that human rights are universal and indissociable. Canada can be respectful of different cultures without moralizing and without distinguishing between different kinds of rights. It is the elite, rather than the public, who contend that Asia is counting more on socio-economic rights than on human rights.

Next, participants discussed appropriate actions to take in the field of human rights. Canada is faced with several options. It can maintain a hard line and impose economic sanctions, as it did in the case of South Africa, or it can take a diplomatic approach, to avoid ruffling foreign feathers. Promoting trade is another option. There are those who doubt, however, that trade can have an impact on human rights, particularly when the country involved is recognized as a medium-weight economic power. It is not easy to strike a balance between trade and human rights. Society must make choices which entail some efforts and some costs. The belief in Asia that promoting human rights is tantamount to interference affects us, since markets can be seductive. Yet, the elite's arguments about the sovereignty of states lacks substance. These elites, who have appointed themselves the standard-bearers of so-called Asian values, are often challenged by groups in the civil society who must be identified and supported. Asian countries were present in 1948 when the Declaration of Human Rights recognizing all values and cultures was drafted. Our position on human rights versus trade should be the same for Latin America, Africa and Asia, even if this means adapting to different cultures. Another option is to support local organizations and community associations. The consensus seems to be that some elements of each approach should be retained, but adapted to individual circumstances and countries.

Regarding the link between trade and human rights, a lively debate ensued on the nature of this relationship: was it possible to achieve a balance or were we dealing with a fundamental contradiction? Some were of the opinion that trade, while not the primary tool, can improve living conditions and foster a better climate for human rights. It would be dangerous to compartmentalize these two issues. It is not only possible, but desirable, for Canada to pay attention to both. Others argued that the interests of business people, whose quest for profit was not necessarily conducive to respect for human rights, posed a contradiction. Furthermore, trade spinoffs in Canada are relative. In Canada, a balance has yet to be struck between economic development and social justice. How then do we know for certain that trade will improve the living conditions of the poorest of the poor? It is difficult to reconcile the two in actual fact. The Canadian government must make a choice which entails promoting Canadian values, not simply trade. Canada's foreign policy must regain some measure of credibility with the Canadian public, otherwise radical ways of thinking could gain in popularity. In short, proponents of this view believe that Canadian companies must change their way of doing business (code of ethics) so that trade can be a positive means of strengthening human rights. It is hard to reconcile these two positions, but the contradictions show that greater consideration must be given to human rights issues and the impact of trade. The debate is not whether trade helps or hinders human rights, but rather how to devote equal amounts of time and energy to trade and human rights.

Next, it was noted that Canada has a responsibility to engage in and promote multilateral initiatives. However, the amount of energy devoted to influencing the decision process should depend on the organization in question. The same strategy cannot be employed to deal with both the WTO and APEC. Furthermore, if a decision is made to target a particular country, it would be preferable to determine how best multilateral actions can be coordinated. It would be in our best interests to coordinate our diplomatic policies with other countries.

Canada's civil society must also be taken into account. Several courses of action are possible, namely boycotting products from countries with poor human rights records. Partnerships

between Canadian and Asian NGOs should be encouraged. The public can sometimes work more effectively than the government. Canadian civil society must be properly informed before getting involved. Canada's educational system is one resource that must be tapped. By targeting and involving both the formal and informal sectors of the educational system, a true exchange of values can take place.

A series of concerns raised by several group members deserve further mention at this time.

These initiatives should be ongoing and extend beyond the Year of Asia-Pacific. At the 1993 Vienna forum, the different governments embraced a number of principles such as the universality and interdependence of rights. Economic growth was also identified not as an end per se, but as a means of promoting these rights. The time is right to focus on achievements and bring to light improvements to be made. The 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is an ideal reason for extending these discussions. Asia does not need Canadian projects, but rather Canada's vision.

Finally, these discussions could focus on a common theme, namely the promotion of constitutional government. Canada's vast legal expertise in this field could be put to good use. Canada must push for the ratification of international conventions and for concrete changes to national laws. The numerous reservations imposed by Asia limit the scope of these conventions. Therefore, efforts must be made to convince these governments to limit the number of reservations, as well as their scope.

Moreover, symbols play an important role in Asia. Canadian missions like Team Canada would do well to give equal consideration to trade interests and human rights. If this were the case, mutual understanding would develop between companies and the civil society.

Mention was made, and with good reason, of the problems associated with formulating foreign policy. Admittedly, cohesiveness is difficult to achieve and pressure is exercised equally by the civil society and by different government authorities. The government's freedom of action is restricted when it comes to trade. The WTO and the problem of extra-territorial and local laws rarely enforced in Asia all hamper the government's ability to manoeuvre. Clear parameters would result in a less chaotic foreign policy. For instance, co-operation is in order whenever progress is possible. However, sanctions are called for when progress is impossible. China has entered into agreements allowing exchanges to help establish a judicial system, whereas Burma has refused to even participate in a contact group. Canada must act accordingly. Consideration must also be given to the impact our foreign policy will have on the region. No attempt should be made to act alone. It is more difficult to take a hard-line approach when criticism is isolated. Finally, Canada must seek to exercise a certain amount of influence. One option would be to promote academic and student exchanges with Asia.

Canada must resist the temptation to multiply its initiatives and to continue being present everywhere in a minor capacity. It must adopt a professional approach to its co-operative actions. Its strategic choices must be based on well-defined criteria and must identify specific areas of intervention. If the problem is arms sales in South Asia, then our focus should be on peace

issues. Examples of professional approaches to aid can be found in Sweden and in Norway. One solution would be to initiate action on a number of fronts and thus develop a broader sphere of influence.

Canada must support the eventual creation by the UN of a mechanism to protect human rights. The lack of a system for promoting human rights in Asia is a problem that needs to be addressed. Newly formed commissions in Asia need support, Canada's included. Co-operation between national networks and regional institutions should also be actively encouraged. Canadian NGOs should lend their support to regional institutions dedicated to upholding human rights.

Culture is one variable that was briefly mentioned. It can play an important role and is a crucial factor in any discussion. Cultural exchanges are one way of promoting human rights. It is in everyone's best interest to promote Canadian culture and to introduce Canadians to Asia. Mutual appreciation fosters confidence which can be beneficial to discussions on human rights.

Lastly, participants discussed the annexation question. Canada's stand on this issue is reflected in its handling of the situation in Timor. Work with local NGOs and the Catholic church must be sustained and dialogue between the people of Timor encouraged. A number of Canadian NGOs are already focussing on these questions. In spite of this, however, Canada must take a more proactive approach to dealing with Tibet and Timor.

### **Recommendations**

In response to the initial series of questions, workshop participants made a number of recommendations which are summarized below.

a) Canada unquestionably has a role to play in upholding human rights abroad. However, while Canada must intervene to help move the debate forward, it must also find a niche for itself and distinguish itself on the international stage. In short, it needs to make some strategic choices.

b) No distinctions should be drawn between different kinds of rights (individual, democratic or associative). Rights are universal, interdependent and indissociable.

c) Civil society must be steadfastly defended. Often, its members are stronger supporters of human rights than members of the elite. With respect to trade, the issue is not whether trade is good or bad as a means of promoting human rights, but rather how the two, trade and human rights, can be reconciled. Participants agreed that both issues warranted the same level of commitment.

d) Cohesiveness must be sought between diplomatic (bilateral) and structural (long-term) initiatives.

e) Canadian civil society has a role to play. Witness the importance of consumption. Participants suggested co-operative actions with Asian civil society.

Other suggestions moved beyond the initial parameters, but were no less important.

f) A number of questions should first be answered: What does the Asia-Pacific region mean to us? What can we offer this region in terms of products, persons and values? What are our objectives? Which preferred methods should we adopt? With whom should we forge alliances?

g) Defending human rights should be seen as an ongoing activity. For example, the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the five-year follow up to the Vienna conference can serve as opportunities to initiate further discussion.

h) Canada should promote constitutional government, that is it should diplomatically encourage the ratification of treaties and the appropriate legislative changes, restrict the number of reservations and establish forums to promote dialogue on this subject.

i) The make-up of Team Canada should reflect the concerns of Canadians. Groups dedicated to human rights would thus have the same voice as business and government.

j) The government could support the development of regional and national organizations dedicated to promoting human rights.

k) Rather than provide minor assistance to many regions, Canada should target strategic countries for aid.

l) Canada must set an example in terms of treaty ratification, that is it must move to ratify as quickly as possible all treaties that it has signed.

m) Cultural exchanges between Asia-Pacific countries and Canada should be promoted.

n) The educational system could be further targeted in an effort to heighten the awareness and level of information of civil society members.

Other suggestions moved beyond the initial parameters, but with no less importance, to include a number of fronts and thus develop a broader sphere of influence.

A number of questions should first be answered: What does the Asia-Pacific region mean to us? What can we offer this region in terms of products, persons and values? What are our objectives? What priorities must be established? What should we do for the long term?

The lack of a system for promoting human rights in China remains a major obstacle. Newly formed committees in Asia need support. Canada must support the development of a national network of human rights activists and the five-year follow-up to the Vienna conference can serve as a catalyst to further human rights education.

Defending human rights should be seen as an ongoing activity. For example, the 20th anniversary of the International Declaration of Human Rights and the five-year follow-up to the Vienna conference can serve as a catalyst to further human rights education.

Culture is one variable that was largely recognized by educators. It is an important factor in any discussion of human rights. The role of culture in human rights education and the role of education in human rights education are two issues that should be addressed.

The make-up of Team Canada should reflect the concerns of Canadians. Groups dedicated to human rights work should have their voices heard in the process of selecting members. It is important to work with local NGOs and to have a strong presence in the field.

The government should support the development of regional and national organizations. It is already focusing on these questions in spite of the fact that many groups are already active in dealing with Tibet and other issues.

Rather than provide minor assistance to many regions, Canada should target strategic countries for aid.

Canada must set an example in terms of treaty ratification, but it must move to ratify as quickly as possible all treaties it has signed.

Cultural exchange is a key to human rights education. Canada should be proactive in promoting cultural exchange with other countries.

The educational system should be re-examined to ensure that it is providing a high level of information to civil society members.

No distinction should be drawn between different rights of individuals, groups, and associations. Rights are universal, inalienable and indivisible.

Civil society must be steadfastly defended. Often, its members are stronger supporters of human rights than members of the state. With respect to trade, the issue is not whether trade is good or bad as a means of promoting human rights, but rather how the two, used and abused, can be reconciled. Participants agreed that both human and economic development should be pursued in a balanced and mutually reinforcing manner.

Cohesiveness must be sought between diplomatic (bilateral) and structural (long-term) initiatives.

Canadian civil society has a role to play. With the importance of consumption, participants suggested co-operative action with Asian civil society.

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## Workshop on Sustainable Development

### Questions

- a) Which environmental issues warrant priority consideration in order to ensure ongoing development in Asian-Pacific societies?
- b) To what extent should we take into account the different cultures in Asian-Pacific societies in which we are involved in order to achieve sustainable development?
- c) How important should we view the participation in the sustainable development process of local populations in Asian-Pacific societies, including women, youth and aboriginals who are often seen as marginal groups?
- d) What can members of Canada's civil society, that is NGOs, the private sector, the university community and volunteer associations, do to promote sustainable development in Asian-Pacific societies?

What policies should the Canadian government adopt to promote and foster the attainment of sustainable development in Asian-Pacific societies?

### Summary of discussions

The workshop began with participants discussing the dual problem associated with sustainable development, namely the modest role it plays in Canadian foreign policy and the growing importance of globalization and the priority consideration given to trade. A number of questions regarding Canada's foreign policy were raised. For example, should the Canadian government turn a blind eye to China's human rights violations and promote technology transfers to ease China's energy problems? What kind of support should the government lend to NGOs? Should Canada endeavour to promote equitable trade, that is trade which provides fair compensation for goods produced in developing countries? Participants expressed the view that the question of sustainable development cannot be dissociated from other socio-economic issues such as labour laws, trade and human rights.

After setting the backdrop for the debate, participants broached the main environmental issues. The difficulty in accessing information about these issues was initially noted. It was generally agreed that special attention should be paid to intensive forestry operations being carried out in several of the region's countries. This problem directly concerns the interests of companies exploiting forestry resources, corruption and the responsibility of local governments to engage in sound resource management practices.

Other topics such as mining, the development of the Mekong and urban pollution prompted some lively exchanges. For participants, in order to address the major environmental challenges, it is important to first define the relationship between sustainable development and trade. Are these two themes contradictory or can they lead to complementary action?

One participant briefly reviewed the development assistance policies of multilateral institutions. Where once the development of government capabilities was given priority attention, multilateral institutions now emphasize the development of a country's internal resources (social, human and institutional resources). For this reason, it is important to work toward the *integration* of the different cultures in Asian-Pacific societies in order to promote the type of sustainable development *desired* by local populations.

Participants also stressed that development and environmental problems should not be analysed solely from the standpoint of producing countries. Important constraints are associated with the supply of and demand for products from developing countries. This is why it is important to heighten consumer awareness of environmental problems. Participants discussed the relevance of instituting an environmental rating system for listed companies. Such a system would have the advantage of motivating companies to adopt environmental practices. Despite some differences of opinion regarding the specifics of such a system, all participants felt that the idea deserved to be considered by the government.

Participants then went on to discuss cultural differences at great length. This theme ties in with the first two questions they were asked to consider. As far as most are concerned, when considering a development project, the issue of the relevance of the Western economic development model and the participation of local populations must be addressed. What are the real needs of the local populations? Who sets development priorities?

In addition to highlighting the major cultural differences in Asia-Pacific, participants stressed the presence of cultural diversity within a given country (for example, the differences between mountain dwellers and urban populations). It was also noted that different levels of economic development could be present within the same country and that consequently, populations had different needs. In the opinion of many, development models that draw their inspiration of the concept of eco-tourism, which seeks to integrate the needs of the people with business requirements, present some interesting possibilities.

Participants expressed the view that in order for a development project to be effective, local populations must be involved in setting project parameters as well as in the implementation phase. Efforts must be made to understand the community decision-making process. Furthermore, the often-divergent interests of the country's governing elite and the local populations must be reconciled. To facilitate this integration process, it is important to increase the number of people who act as go-betweens for donor countries. To implement a project, it is also important to have in-depth knowledge of the customs, values and traditions of local populations and to make a concerted effort to heighten the awareness of project participants.

The integration of technologies into different cultures was also discussed. Several examples were given of technologies developed in the Western world which proved to be unworkable in the East because they clashed with certain customs. A consensus emerged on the need to conduct independent impact assessments to ensure that local populations participate in projects to the fullest extent.

Regarding the role of Canada's civil society, participants stressed above all the importance of co-operation among all societal components. Trade missions must include representatives of different sectors. Some participants pointed out that companies already work with other sectors (NGOs, universities) in the drafting of strategic business and foreign investment plans. Finally, participants emphasized the importance of promoting fair trade with developing countries.

The workshop on sustainable development gave all participants an opportunity to engage in constructive dialogue. Each person was able to share his or her thoughts and experiences with the group. Special attention was paid to the issue of cultural diversity and to the importance of involving the people who stand to benefit directly in each stage of the project. Participants felt that this was critical to the success of such undertakings. Lastly, the group expressed the belief that the Canadian government can and must play an active role in promoting policies aimed at achieving sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region.

### **Recommendations**

The frankness and breadth of the workshop discussions led to participants agreeing on thirteen recommendations. All felt that the government should do the following:

- a) clearly define Canadian priorities with respect to sustainable development;
- b) direct a larger percentage of government development assistance to NGOs working in the field;
- c) assume a leading role in multilateral forums, as is already the case for issues such as child labour and anti-personnel mines. Leadership must be reflected in the drafting of more stringent standards than those in place in other developed countries;
- d) encourage Canadians and Canadian companies operating abroad to respect Canadian values;
- e) have aid programs target the development of social, human and institutional resources rather than the development of government capabilities;
- f) introduce a public awareness policy by stressing global interdependence and sustainable development. This policy, which must address issues such as labour and environmental laws, must also examine the possibility of establishing a certification system for products and listed companies;
- g) encourage Canadian companies to seek ISO 14000 certification;
- h) demand independent impact assessments to ensure that projects are based on viable economic models and that local populations participate fully in them;

- i) encourage local populations to participate fully in each project phase, from design to implementation. In particular, the government should work to reconcile the often-divergent interests of the governing elites and the local populations;
- j) promote the development and marketing of technologies adapted to socio-cultural conditions present in developing countries. The government needs to develop better synergy between Canadian companies and NGOs working in the field;
- k) encourage co-operation and dialogue between all components of Canada's civil society, taking care not to place them in competition with one another;
- l) ensure that the members of trade missions (Team Canada) represent a wide range of sectors;
- m) develop and encourage fair trade (i.e fair compensation for goods produced in developing countries).

## **Workshop on codes of ethics in trade relations with the Asia-Pacific region**

### **Questions**

a) What advantages and disadvantages do you see to the use of ethics codes in our trade relations with Asian-Pacific societies?

b) What are the priority standards that should be included in these codes of ethics--labour codes, aspects of sustainable development, native rights, women's rights...--and which we should thus focus greater attention on?

c) Should these codes of ethics be monitored at the national or international level?

In either case, should they be monitored at the national or international level?

d) How can the members of Canadian civil society--NGOs, the private sector, academics, voluntary associations... further the use of ethics codes in our trade relations with Asian-Pacific societies?

What policies should the Canadian government adopt with regard to the drafting and implementation of ethics codes to facilitate our trade relations with Asian-Pacific companies?

### **Summary of discussions**

The discussions of the working group focused first of all on defining the code of ethics, highlighting its advantages and disadvantages. The participants agreed that the positive effects of using an ethics code generally become apparent in the long term. Access to capital, tax reductions, a drop in insurance premiums and a better market image in the minds of consumers are the main points in favour of the use of ethics codes. However, several downsides make the use of those codes very difficult. Firstly, it is not always easy to draw the line between an ethics code and a law. The code should never be a law unless there is some extreme situation to warrant that. That difference between an ethics code and a law allows the concept of value systems within businesses to be introduced. That system of values should be the basis of the ethics code the business espouses. Unfortunately, however, those values can differ from one business to another, or simply be absent in certain industrial sectors.

Business competition at the global level is another factor that makes the use of ethics codes very difficult. International competition among businesses makes them less receptive to discussions about codes to govern behaviour. As Canadian businesses must also face international competition and as they generate vital jobs here in Canada and abroad, the imposition of ethics codes should not affect their ability to compete.

In light of that, monitoring or verifying that the code is being complied with is probably the most important issue. Motivating businesses to get them to use and respect an ethics code is very problematic. There are two possible approaches to this: public control, with the attendant costs

and extra-territoriality issues that go along with government intervention, and a private approach, such as through chambers of commerce or the media, where the code of conduct is not imposed by some higher authority, but by market forces.

Participants were in favour of a less constraining approach to the application of ethics codes. As there are no effective means of forcing businesses to use those codes, alternatives must be found in order to motivate businesses to adopt them. One way of motivating them would be certification similar to the "ISO 9000" certification. That internationally recognized certification attests to a company's wish to make quality products. That idea might solve several problems if something similar could be put in place with regard to codes compliance. Aside from solving the problem of monitoring the application of the code by business at the international level, that solution would put international businesses on an equal footing, thus making the problem of international competitiveness secondary.

For such an initiative to be successful, the working group believed that the Canadian government should make efforts at two levels, both regional and multilateral. The participants recognized that even though Canada is well viewed by the international community in this area, a simple desire on Canada's part to see codes of ethics brought in would not be sufficient to see the matter progress satisfactorily in the near future. For this reason participants believed that Canada should work with countries that are directly involved or have shown a marked interest in seeing the situation evolve.

Canada should first of all intervene within a multi-regional structure such as NAFTA. Canada should seize the opportunity NAFTA represents to introduce certain guidelines concerning ethics codes. Should the agreement eventually include Chile, this would provide the opportunity of introducing this new element into NAFTA. The use of a side agreement could also be considered. Canada's second level of intervention should be action with the various institutions that already exist at the international level. The forums provided by the OECD and APEC undoubtedly provide opportunities for Canada to raise the international community's awareness of this issue. The participants, however, did agree that intervention should begin within the organizations that are already in place.

The internationalization of ethics codes creates other problems solutions must be found for. The code's constitutive elements are among these. The points to be included in ethics codes were not unanimously agreed upon. Regional cultures pose an obstacle in many regards when attempts are made to define the content of an ethics code and will also do so when the code is to be applied. Consequently, Canada's position on this point will be difficult to defend at the international level, and that is why the responsible authorities should seek to obtain the support of NGOs and businesses in coming up with "model" codes of ethics.

This topic provided the group with an opportunity of defining what it felt were the essential elements of an ethics code. The one topic that was central to these discussions was the need to curb corruption and its effects as much as possible. An American law that has extraterritorial application, the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, was cited as one example of a means to be used to put an end to corruption. But beyond laws, the group focused on ethics codes specifying that

respect for human rights should be a key element in the content of any code. The environment, working conditions, including health and safety at work, product safety, and political contributions are also elements that should be included in ethics codes. It should be noted however that simply respecting laws is not sufficient as a principle to anchor codes of ethics. That is mainly due to the fact that in some countries the legal system is silent in this regard. Some participants emphasized that fact that it is difficult for our country to moralize or even simply to guide by example when Canada has not even signed all of the relevant conventions having to do with ethics codes.

Another problem having to do with the make-up of the code is the agreement of the business milieus. In order to ensure uniform use of the codes they must be approved by businesses or they run the risk of becoming nothing more than a marketing tool. To avoid such a situation it is essential to obtain the participation of business leaders at all levels, involving them in the work in progress and the development of the codes.

In the course of discussions held during the day, another point seemed to garner unanimous support. The role of government is not to develop the tool, the code, but to promote the values that underlie the use of such codes. That promotion of values must be done internationally, as mentioned previously, as well as on the domestic front, by raising the awareness of businesses and populations. That awareness-raising can be done in various ways, such as using monetary incentives to encourage businesses to develop their own ethics codes, but the dissemination of information is probably the best way of educating business people, and by so doing, the population in general. That information should among other things highlight the advantages that businesses can derive from using ethics codes. The information available should be centralized in order to make redistribution easier. Participants believed that the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade should play that centralizing role where information is concerned since its status as a federal organization is reassuring to the community as to the reliability and dependability of the information collected.

Drafting the ethics codes and monitoring their application should be the responsibility of the business world. Leadership from this quarter is essential to progress on this front. The support of NGOs should also be sought but participants stated without hesitation that without the support of business, nothing conclusive would be accomplished in the short and medium term.

### **Recommendations**

Following the work done during the day, participants arrived at a consensus on the recommendations to be made. They are the result of discussions and an exchange of ideas around the questions raised in the workshop. The group recommends:

- a) that the government do a study to assess the socioeconomic consequences of ethics codes for the host countries and the countries of origin who will be implementing those codes;
- b) that the government study and promote the possibility of extending ISO standards to put in place certification related to the ethics code that would be recognized internationally;

c) that the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade set up a database that would include all of the codes of ethics used by businesses so that they may be distributed to countries on request and that in return for registering their code the businesses obtain from the department the ISO certification documents for their code;

d) that the government examine the possibility of enacting an anti-corruption law. This recommendation would follow upon a study of the American Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, 1977, a study bearing on the effectiveness of the consequences of that act;

e) that the government advocate the creation and application of ethics codes containing the following elements: anti-corruption measures, working conditions, the security of products, health and safety at work, the environment, political contributions, human rights, including, among other issues, child labour and discrimination against women;

f) that the government focus its efforts on promoting those values in both a regional context (NAFTA) and a multilateral one (OECD, APEC).

All of these recommendations should not make us lose sight of the ultimate purpose of ethics codes. Those codes must first and foremost improve the behaviour of businesses and their employees abroad. To do so the codes must be an initiative emanating from the private sector, or that sector must impose this working tool on itself. The role of government remains important for all that; it must be the catalyst of the efforts being made and as the need arises it must provide a framework for those efforts. First and foremost, however, its role is to promote and inform. The advantages related to the use of ethics codes are numerous, but they are not well known. As long as they remain vague and poorly explained it is improbable that the business world will adopt behaviours compatible with the objectives of Canada's foreign policy.

## Workshop on freedom of the press and freedom of expression

### Questions

- a) What advantages and disadvantages are there to maintaining or putting in place new communications media allowing for freedom of expression in the Asia-Pacific regions?
- b) What importance should we attribute to new communications technologies in Asian-Pacific societies?
- c) What importance should we attribute to traditional means of communication--radio, television, the print media... in Asian-Pacific societies?
- d) How should members of Canadian civil society--NGOs, the private sector, universities, academics, voluntary associations--further the emergence and smooth operation of freedom of the press and freedom of expression in Asian-Pacific societies?

What policies should the Canadian government adopt in order to promote and contribute to the emergence and smooth operation of freedom of the press and freedom of expression in Asian-Pacific societies?

### Summary of discussions

Following a brief introduction on the part of the discussion facilitator, a participant wondered whether there could be freedom of the press and freedom of expression where there are no democratic freedoms. Participants were unanimous in recognizing freedom of the press as a vector of democracy. One participant added that not only was it a tool but also a product: without democracy there cannot be freedom of the press.

However, one participant from the journalistic world stated that it was the duty of the media to provoke change to move societies toward democracy. Ultimately, the press's action can bring about the democratization of a society. He added to this that the poor training reporters received in some countries might provoke journalistic flaws (lies, errors) that undermine the credibility of the media and provide ammunition to those who condemn freedom of expression. That participant emphasized that one of the measures that could be undertaken by the government was to support training programs for journalists from dictatorships in order to allow for a quality press to emerge. He noted that France offers training period in its universities for foreign journalists. That initiative seemed excellent to the participant because journalists trained in France become ambassadors favourable to the French government's point of view abroad. This last proposal did meet with some reluctance on the part of some participants who feared that the government might be accused of interfering in the internal affairs of other states. Further, it was noted that the Canadian government has already established certain programs of this type.

One participant pointed out that it is difficult to promote freedom of the press in States where economic success is the primary objective. Thus, the government of Singapore can crush the press using as a pretext the fact that the economic well-being of the community is more important than individual freedoms as embodied in freedom of the press and freedom of expression. For Singapore journalists, it is difficult to counter that logic when their country is having resounding economic success.

Another participant stated that the Western media has to step in to complete the work being done by the media in countries where there is no freedom of the press. It is difficult however for those international media to enter countries that do not recognize freedom of the press. It was noted that organizations such as the BBC, RCI and Radio Free Europe are among the only credible information sources for those countries and it was pointed out that support for those organizations should continue.

A participant pointed out that reporters in many countries are in danger. He stated that external support for those vulnerable journalists was necessary. The creation of networks among journalists from different countries and support to NGOs in this area through the use of new means of communication seems like a good way of protecting reporters who are most likely to suffer from government measures. Although recognizing the important role of NGOs in the sector the participants for the majority felt that the Canadian government could not support such undertakings or it would be accused of interference. It is indeed difficult according to some for diplomats to explain to other States the difference between promoting values and imposing them. The breakdown of diplomatic relations has very serious consequences for journalists in Asian countries. However, the participants were unanimous in stating that the presence of journalists prevents horrors from being perpetrated.

A participant stated that at that level the problem of freedom of the press was related to the issue of good governance. All were in agreement.

The Canadian example, in spite of many weaknesses, can serve as an example to Asian countries. Through its mixed property approach and success in protecting Canadian culture in spite of its powerful neighbour it can be held up as proof that a culture can be protected without constraining individual freedoms. RCI is also one facet of Canadian communications that demonstrates the advantages of providing financial support and of freedom of the press. For a minimal cost, RCI allows for the dissemination of quality information and of the Canadian image throughout the world. Further, it was suggested that the Canadian government examine the Korean case as a possible example of the movement of a formerly autocratic state toward freedom of expression. It was also suggested that when possible Canada invite Japan to conduct a diplomatic campaign to improve press conditions in Asia.

Participants raised various possible interventions at different points. One stated that rural radio stations should be encouraged in Asian countries where this is relevant; another added that in Chinese society, still for the most part a rural one, computer links could be set up in villages to allow for information to be disseminated to all, and the Canadian government could support such a measure.

It was also suggested that the Canadian government should take advantage of the francophonie Summit in Hanoi to promote basic freedoms such as freedom of the press and freedom of expression. The majority of the committee felt that it was risky for the government to undertake such a campaign.

The theme of freedom of the press as a tool of democracy was raised repeatedly throughout the discussions. There are two potential risks for Canada that were mentioned. Firstly, the danger, which is becoming increasingly concrete with each passing year, of seeing the nature of information provided by Canadian media change. Content is moving increasingly toward entertainment and because of commercial imperatives, sensationalized topics are being presented that are removed from what information should be. Canadian citizens are no longer being presented with tools to allow them to make democratic decisions but rather with a compendium of broad headlines without depth. Canadian citizens can no longer make the necessary political decisions because they are not being equipped to do so. Further, this flaw in Canadian information provides ammunition to the Asian critics of freedom of the press who can claim that Hollywood and sensationalism dominate the press and that freedom of the press means a compromise with values that differ from their own country's values.

The second danger is that so-called Asian values may spread to Canada. It was said that the many Canadian trade contacts with Asian countries may create among business people a desire to see certain Asian methods applied in Canada. The priority that Asian states grant to economic development without regard for democratic rights may prove a poor inspiration to Canadian business milieus. They might become the vector for the penetration into Canadian society of these anti-democratic positions. The participants were unanimous that the Canadian government should defend the country against such a development and felt that it should trigger some fundamental reflexion on that topic in order to be ready to defend universal values in international forums.

The working group also discussed questions related to the presence of private business in non-democratic countries where human rights are curtailed. The majority of committee members felt that Canadian businesses cannot be the sole bearers of democratization and respect for human rights. The government and businesses in other countries must also support measures to promote human rights if they are to be effective. A Canadian company cannot on its own conduct this type of manoeuvre without running the risk of losing its competitiveness and access to markets as well as its capacity to conduct trade successfully. The participants felt that the government should consider reflexion and public debate on the dichotomy between defending fundamental human rights and promoting of Canadian trade, which places the Canadian government in a perpetual grey area where its real position is not truly known to the Canadian public or foreign countries.

Participants recognized the importance of informal diplomacy in Asia. That diplomacy, known as track two, ultimately leads to formal diplomacy which allows for the signature of international agreements. They felt this remained the best means of intervention in the region. However, they pointed out that in some cases more forceful methods were indicated, such as in the case of Myanmar, a good example.

To further informal diplomacy, the participants encouraged the use of academic forums. Twinning local media and Asian media was also suggested. Finally, the lack of interest on the part of the Canadian press for Asian questions was pointed out, with its consequences for the Canadian public.

Participants felt that assisting the press was useless in a non-democratic society where the press is controlled. They felt for the majority that economic, democratic and social development had to precede the advent of a free press.

They felt that where new technologies were concerned each Asian country was pursuing different avenues. The current effervescence of the telecommunications sector in Asia makes it difficult to predict what will ultimately happen in this sector. Participants thus felt that pursuing policies could be costly if the needs were not well interpreted. Consequently, the committee felt that it could not make recommendations on this topic. One participant pointed out that market forces will decide, and only then will it be appropriate to intervene.

## **Recommendations**

### **Preamble**

The Canadian government is faced with a dilemma. On the one hand, it wants to promote human rights and universal values. On the other, it must promote trade with foreign countries if the country is to continue to prosper. This is what led participants to recommend that:

- a) the Canadian government continue its tradition of dealing with each Asian country on a case by case basis according to criteria ranging from each State's democratic development to the importance of commercial exchanges between those States and Canada.
- b) the Canadian government undertake an in-depth reflexion on the danger some so-called Asian values and positions pose to universal values such as freedom of the press and freedom of expression. The Canadian government must develop a policy that will protect Canada from the spread of these so-called Asian values and ensure that these values recognized as universal endure.
- c) in spite of its flaws, the Canadian system has allowed for the survival of Canadian cultural values while allowing a plurality of opinions to be expressed on the air. The Canadian government must use the Canadian mixed radio and television broadcasting system as a model in its discussions with Asian states on freedom of the press.
- d) to show that Canada is serious in its pursuit of quality independent radio, participants recommended that Radio-Canada International (RCI) be maintained and that its long-term funding be ensured.

e) the government continue to organize forums such as those of the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development. The committee suggested that the Centre's scope be broadened in order that it not only study policies but also examine means of intervention and that this be done by experts.

f) participants reiterated the Victoria forum recommendation that it be recognized that freedom of expression and freedom of the press cannot be dissociated from the human rights issue, but rather, that they are an inherent part of it.

c) Should these codes of ethics be monitored at the national or international level?

In either case, should they be monitored at the national or international level?

d) How can the members of Canadian civil society--NGOs, the private sector, academics, voluntary associations... further the use of ethics codes in our trade relations with Asian-Pacific societies?

What policies should the Canadian government adopt with regard to the drafting and implementation of ethics codes to facilitate our trade relations with Asian-Pacific companies?

### Summary of discussion

The discussions of the working group focused first of all on the definition of defining the code of ethics, highlighting its advantages and disadvantages. The participants agreed that the positive effects of using an ethics code generally become apparent in the long term. Access to capital, tax reductions, a drop in insurance premiums and a better market image in the minds of consumers are the main points in favour of the use of ethics codes. However, several downsides make the use of those codes very difficult. Firstly, it is not always easy to draw the line between an ethics code and a law. The code should never be a law unless there is some extreme situation to warrant that. That difference between an ethics code and a law allows the concept of value systems within businesses to be introduced. That system of values should be the basis of the ethics code the business espouses. Unfortunately, however, these values can differ from one business to another, or simply be absent in certain industrial sectors.

Business competition at the global level is another factor that makes the use of ethics codes very difficult. International competition among businesses makes them less receptive to discussions about codes to govern behaviour. As Canadian businesses must also face international competition and as they generate vital jobs here in Canada and abroad, the imposition of ethics codes should not affect their ability to compete.

In light of that, monitoring or verifying that the code is being complied with is probably the most

To further inform the public, the government should also organize forums such as those of the Canadian Council on International Policy. The committee suggests that the Centre's scope be broadened in order that it not only study policy but also examine means of intervention and that this be done by experts.

Participants suggested that the Victoria focus be recognized as a controlled experiment rather than a part of a trend. They felt that the issue of expression and freedom of the press cannot be discussed in a vacuum but rather, that they are an inherent part of it.

They felt that where new technologies were concerned, Asia was far ahead of Canada. The current effectiveness of the telecommunications sector in Asia makes it difficult to predict what will ultimately happen in this sector. Participants thus felt that caution should be exercised if the needs were not well interpreted. Consequently, the committee felt that it could not make recommendations on this topic. One participant pointed out that market forces will decide, and only then will it be appropriate to intervene.

### Recommendations

#### Principle

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- c) in spite of its flaws, the Canadian system has allowed for the survival of Canadian cultural values while allowing a plurality of opinions to be expressed on the air. The Canadian government must use the Canadian radio and television broadcasting system as a model in its discussions with Asian states on freedom of the press.
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## Workshop on codes of ethics in trade relations with the Asia-Pacific region

### Questions

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### **Recommendations**

Following the work done during the day, participants arrived at a consensus on the recommendations to be made. They are the result of discussions and an exchange of ideas around the questions raised in the workshop. The group recommends:

- a) that the government do a study to assess the socioeconomic consequences of ethics codes for the host countries and the countries of origin who will be implementing those codes;

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All of these recommendations should not make us lose sight of the ultimate purpose of ethics codes. Those codes must first and foremost improve the behaviour of businesses and their employees abroad. To do so the codes must be an initiative emanating from the private sector, or that sector must impose this working tool on itself. The role of government remains important for all that; it must be the catalyst of the efforts being made and as the need arises it must provide a framework for those efforts. First and foremost, however, its role is to promote and inform. The advantages related to the use of ethics codes are numerous, but they are not well known. As long as they remain vague and poorly explained it is improbable that the business world will adopt behaviours compatible with the objectives of Canada's foreign policy.

### **Workshop on freedom of the press and freedom of expression**

#### **Questions**

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What policies should the Canadian government adopt in order to promote and contribute to the emergence and smooth operation of freedom of the press and freedom of expression in Asian-Pacific societies?

### Summary of discussions

Following a brief introduction on the part of the discussion facilitator, a participant wondered whether there could be freedom of the press and freedom of expression where there are no democratic freedoms. Participants were unanimous in recognizing freedom of the press as a vector of democracy. One participant added that not only was it a tool but also a product: without democracy there cannot be freedom of the press.

However, one participant from the journalistic world stated that it was the duty of the media to provoke change to move societies toward democracy. Ultimately, the press's action can bring about the democratization of a society. He added to this that the poor training reporters received in some countries might provoke journalistic flaws (lies, errors) that undermine the credibility of the media and provide ammunition to those who condemn freedom of expression. That participant emphasized that one of the measures that could be undertaken by the government was to support training programs for journalists from dictatorships in order to allow for a quality press to emerge. He noted that France offers training period in its universities for foreign journalists. That initiative seemed excellent to the participant because journalists trained in France become ambassadors favourable to the French government's point of view abroad. This last proposal did meet with some reluctance on the part of some participants who feared that the government might be accused of interfering in the internal affairs of other states. Further, it was noted that the Canadian government has already established certain programs of this type.

One participant pointed out that it is difficult to promote freedom of the press in States where economic success is the primary objective. Thus, the government of Singapore can crush the press using as a pretext the fact that the economic well-being of the community is more important than individual freedoms as embodied in freedom of the press and freedom of expression. For Singapore journalists, it is difficult to counter that logic when their country is having resounding economic success.

Another participant stated that the Western media has to step in to complete the work being done by the media in countries where there is no freedom of the press. It is difficult however for those international media to enter countries that do not recognize freedom of the press. It was noted that organizations such as the BBC, RCI and Radio Free Europe are among the only credible information sources for those countries and it was pointed out that support for those organizations should continue.

A participant pointed out that reporters in many countries are in danger. He stated that external support for those vulnerable journalists was necessary. The creation of networks among journalists from different countries and support to NGOs in this area through the use of new

means of communication seems like a good way of protecting reporters who are most likely to suffer from government measures. Although recognizing the important role of NGOs in the sector the participants for the majority felt that the Canadian government could not support such undertakings or it would be accused of interference. It is indeed difficult according to some for diplomats to explain to other States the difference between promoting values and imposing them. The breakdown of diplomatic relations has very serious consequences for journalists in Asian countries. However, the participants were unanimous in stating that the presence of journalists prevents horrors from being perpetrated.

A participant stated that at that level the problem of freedom of the press was related to the issue of good governance. All were in agreement.

The Canadian example, in spite of many weaknesses, can serve as an example to Asian countries. Through its mixed property approach and success in protecting Canadian culture in spite of its powerful neighbour it can be held up as proof that a culture can be protected without constraining individual freedoms. RCI is also one facet of Canadian communications that demonstrates the advantages of providing financial support and of freedom of the press. For a minimal cost, RCI allows for the dissemination of quality information and of the Canadian image throughout the world. Further, it was suggested that the Canadian government examine the Korean case as a possible example of the movement of a formerly autocratic state toward freedom of expression. It was also suggested that when possible Canada invite Japan to conduct a diplomatic campaign to improve press conditions in Asia.

Participants raised various possible interventions at different points. One stated that rural radio stations should be encouraged in Asian countries where this is relevant; another added that in Chinese society, still for the most part a rural one, computer links could be set up in villages to allow for information to be disseminated to all, and the Canadian government could support such a measure.

It was also suggested that the Canadian government should take advantage of the francophonie Summit in Hanoi to promote basic freedoms such as freedom of the press and freedom of expression. The majority of the committee felt that it was risky for the government to undertake such a campaign.

The theme of freedom of the press as a tool of democracy was raised repeatedly throughout the discussions. There are two potential risks for Canada that were mentioned. Firstly, the danger, which is becoming increasingly concrete with each passing year, of seeing the nature of information provided by Canadian media change. Content is moving increasingly toward entertainment and because of commercial imperatives, sensationalized topics are being presented that are removed from what information should be. Canadian citizens are no longer being presented with tools to allow them to make democratic decisions but rather with a compendium of broad headlines without depth. Canadian citizens can no longer make the necessary political decisions because they are not being equipped to do so. Further, this flaw in Canadian information provides ammunition to the Asian critics of freedom of the press who can claim that Hollywood and sensationalism dominate the press and that freedom of the press means a

compromise with values that differ from their own country's values.

The second danger is that so-called Asian values may spread to Canada. It was said that the many Canadian trade contacts with Asian countries may create among business people a desire to see certain Asian methods applied in Canada. The priority that Asian states grant to economic development without regard for democratic rights may prove a poor inspiration to Canadian business milieus. They might become the vector for the penetration into Canadian society of these anti-democratic positions. The participants were unanimous that the Canadian government should defend the country against such a development and felt that it should trigger some fundamental reflexion on that topic in order to be ready to defend universal values in international forums.

The working group also discussed questions related to the presence of private business in non-democratic countries where human rights are curtailed. The majority of committee members felt that Canadian businesses cannot be the sole bearers of democratization and respect for human rights. The government and businesses in other countries must also support measures to promote human rights if they are to be effective. A Canadian company cannot on its own conduct this type of manoeuvre without running the risk of losing its competitiveness and access to markets as well as its capacity to conduct trade successfully. The participants felt that the government should consider reflexion and public debate on the dichotomy between defending fundamental human rights and promoting of Canadian trade, which places the Canadian government in a perpetual grey area where its real position is not truly known to the Canadian public or foreign countries.

Participants recognized the importance of informal diplomacy in Asia. That diplomacy, known as track two, ultimately leads to formal diplomacy which allows for the signature of international agreements. They felt this remained the best means of intervention in the region. However, they pointed out that in some cases more forceful methods were indicated, such as in the case of Myanmar, a good example.

To further informal diplomacy, the participants encouraged the use of academic forums. Twinning local media and Asian media was also suggested. Finally, the lack of interest on the part of the Canadian press for Asian questions was pointed out, with its consequences for the Canadian public.

Participants felt that assisting the press was useless in a non-democratic society where the press is controlled. They felt for the majority that economic, democratic and social development had to precede the advent of a free press.

They felt that where new technologies were concerned each Asian country was pursuing different avenues. The current effervescence of the telecommunications sector in Asia makes it difficult to predict what will ultimately happen in this sector. Participants thus felt that pursuing policies could be costly if the needs were not well interpreted. Consequently, the committee felt that it could not make recommendations on this topic. One participant pointed out that market forces will decide, and only then will it be appropriate to intervene.

## Recommendations

### Preamble

The Canadian government is faced with a dilemma. On the one hand, it wants to promote human rights and universal values. On the other, it must promote trade with foreign countries if the country is to continue to prosper. This is what led participants to recommend that:

- a) the Canadian government continue its tradition of dealing with each Asian country on a case by case basis according to criteria ranging from each State's democratic development to the importance of commercial exchanges between those States and Canada.
- b) the Canadian government undertake an in-depth reflexion on the danger some so-called Asian values and positions pose to universal values such as freedom of the press and freedom of expression. The Canadian government must develop a policy that will protect Canada from the spread of these so-called Asian values and ensure that these values recognized as universal endure.
- c) in spite of its flaws, the Canadian system has allowed for the survival of Canadian cultural values while allowing a plurality of opinions to be expressed on the air. The Canadian government must use the Canadian mixed radio and television broadcasting system as a model in its discussions with Asian states on freedom of the press.
- d) to show that Canada is serious in its pursuit of quality independent radio, participants recommended that Radio-Canada International (RCI) be maintained and that its long-term funding be ensured.
- e) the government continue to organize forums such as those of the Canadian Centre for foreign policy development. The committee suggested that its scope be broadened in order that it not only study policies but also examine means of intervention and that this be done by experts.
- f) participants reiterated the Victoria forum recommendation that it be recognized that freedom of expression and freedom of the press cannot be dissociated from the human rights issue, but rather, that they are an inherent part of it.

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The Canadian government is faced with a dilemma. On the one hand, it wants to promote human and universal values. On the other, it must promote trade with foreign countries if the country is to continue to prosper. This is what led participants to recommend that:

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