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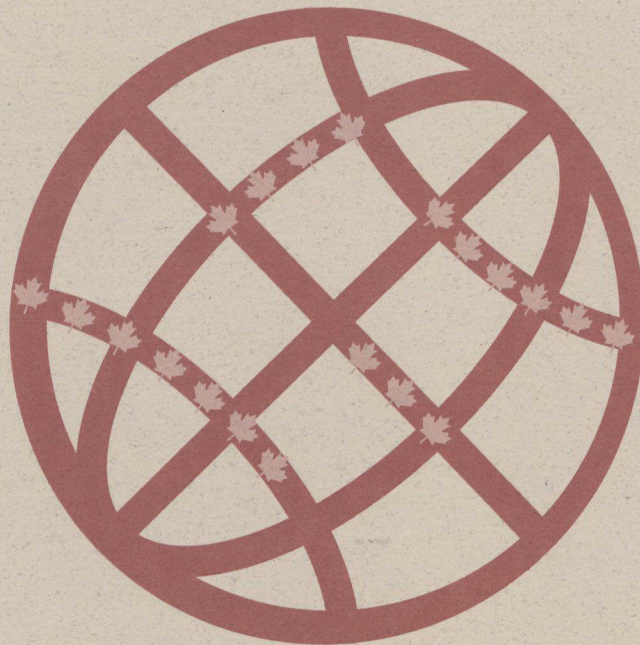


Centre Canadien  
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# Policy Options

**SUMMARIES OF ASIA-PACIFIC ROUNDTABLES**

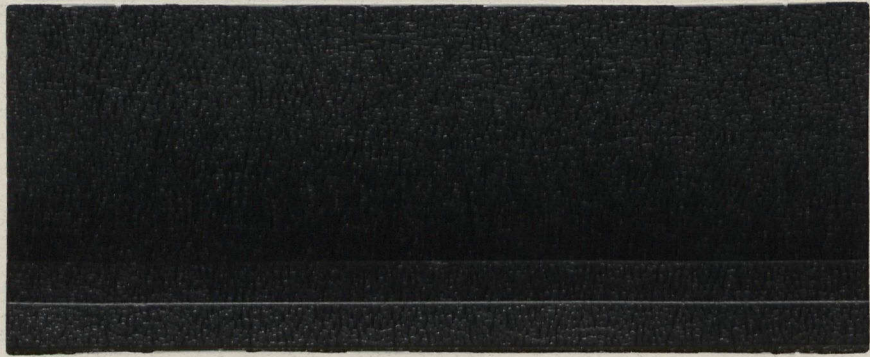
**MARCH 1997**



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*Introduction*

At its fall Montreal meeting the Foreign Affairs Minister's Advisory Board (Professor Janice Gross Stein, Chair) recommended public policy issues in 1997. In January the first combined meeting of the National and Vancouver Organizing Committees for the APEC Peoples Summit determined six policy areas for attention: women, sustainable development, human rights, free media, participation of aboriginal peoples and youth. In February and March the Centre initiated a number of Roundtables across Canada to facilitate public views and policy discussion of some of these issues.

**SUMMARIES OF ASIA-PACIFIC ROUNDTABLES**  
**MARCH 1997**

Summaries of Roundtables are available below. Included are: Human Rights and Business and Codes of Conduct Issues (Calgary); Women and Economic Development in Asia (Vancouver); Indigenous Heritage Rights and APEC (Saskatoon). Other Roundtables included a survey discussion of Sustainable Development interests (Vancouver), Participation of Aboriginal Peoples (Victoria), Central Asian Security (Ottawa).

Organizers and participants deserve generous thanks for their work and for responding quickly and enthusiastically to these initiatives. The Roundtables were designed to generate ideas and if possible policy options. They are not the defining "consultations" on the issues.

- Human Rights and International Business**
- Codes of Conduct**
- Indigenous Heritage Rights and APEC**
- Women and Economic Development in Asia**
- Open Markets, Open Media ?**

Steve Cbe  
National Director

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## HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

Sponsored by the Faculty of Law and The International Centre of the University of  
**Introduction** Roundtable on Human Rights and International Business was held on  
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Summaries of the reports from some of those Roundtables follow. Included are: Human Rights and Business and Code of Conduct issues (Calgary), Women and Economic Development in Asia (Saint John), Free Media (Vancouver), Indigenous Heritage Rights and APEC (Saskatoon). Other Roundtables included a survey discussion of Sustainable Development interests (Vancouver), Participation of Aboriginal Peoples (Victoria), Central Asian Security (Ottawa).

Organizers and participants deserve generous thanks for their work and for responding quickly and enthusiastically to these initiatives. The Roundtables were designed to generate ideas and if possible policy options. They are not the defining "consultations" on these important issues. There will be other policy discussion events in coming months, including further meetings of the National Forum 1997 which is also considering some of these issues in the Asia-Pacific context. Short notice for some events limited opportunities for participation, including the participation of Foreign Affairs officials, who invariably bring important views to policy discussions. Publication is meant to help continue public-government discussion and policy development.

Steve Lee  
National Director



## HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

*Sponsored by the Faculty of Law and The International Centre of the University of Calgary, the Roundtable on Human Rights and International Business was held on March 20, 1997. Participants from the academic, NGO and business communities were very well represented by individuals such as Bill Keys from Transcanada Pipelines, Grand Chief Phil Fontaine of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Professor Joy Calkin, Vice-President, Academic, of the University of Calgary and Ann McGrath of OXFAM.*

A general consensus was found to exist on the importance of human rights to international business. The concept of human rights was felt to be an extremely broad one with many inter-related sub-issues such as harassment, occupational health and safety, environmental practices and corruption.

The small group discussions raised a number of interesting issues and generated several key suggestions for the involvement of international business in the protection of human rights. While there was not always consensus on each of the issues raised, the discussions represented the beginning of a potentially profitable dialogue among the various sectors involved in the Roundtable.

One of the critical issues raised within all of the small discussion groups was the need for a deeper understanding among all sectors on human rights in general and within a Canadian perspective in particular. The issue of cultural relativism versus universal human rights was discussed. It was also recognized that each of the sectors involved in the Roundtable had different perspectives on human rights and that this may derive from ideological differences between those primarily committed to the profit motive and those primarily committed to the promotion of human rights. The issue of political stability was discussed, and the need to better understand the role of human rights protection in generating such stability.

With respect to creating a deeper understanding of human rights from a Canadian perspective, it was suggested that there needs to be greater education for all Canadians, including business, on the human rights Conventions to which Canada is a signatory. There currently seems to be a low level of knowledge of these Conventions and their contents. It was also emphasized that the development of a distinctly Canadian perspective on human rights needs to concentrate on differentiating the Canadian perspective from that of the United States. It was felt that for too long, it has been perceived that Canada's foreign policy mirrors that of the United States and that this is damaging to Canada's international reputation.

Beyond the need for a deeper understanding of human rights, a further issue that was raised was the difficulty in moving from an understanding of human rights to effectively implementing methods for protecting human rights. Developing effective

methods for international business was seen as particularly difficult given the different business contexts within which various businesses work. While businesses that directly employ people overseas may have less difficulty in implementing human rights policies, businesses involved in purely contractual relationships may have less opportunity to put human rights policies into practice.

While the participants of the Roundtable recognized the difficulty for international business in effectively implementing policies to protect human rights, several suggestions were offered and discussed. These suggestions included roles for business, government and individual Canadians.

In the case of business, it was suggested that the adoption of voluntary Codes of Conduct by the business community may be an effective means to improve human rights in countries where they otherwise may not be protected. It was felt that minimally, the terms of Codes of Conduct should contain protection for a basic package of human rights. They should also include incentives for their implementation. It was further suggested that a commitment to a level playing field with respect to protection from corruption and reducing corruption, particularly at the local level, should also be a component. If such corruption codes were added, it was thought their presence could serve the dual role of providing an incentive to adhere to human rights protection as well as protecting companies from corrupt practices of third parties. It was added that "corruption" should be defined to include such practices as sex tourism, use of child prostitutes and child pornography.

In drafting a Code of Conduct, input should be sought from a broad range of participants, including business, NGOs, human rights activists and academics. It was also felt that a review of existing Codes of Conduct should be undertaken to determine their content, effectiveness and applicability to Canadian business. In this vein, one business sector representative brought with him his corporation's International Code of Conduct as an example. The development of a model code to present internationally was felt to be an objective worth pursuing for the APEC meetings.

It was suggested that an effective Code of Conduct could perhaps be implemented at an international level through the IMF, World Bank or the WTO, particularly in the areas of aid projects and infrastructure investments. The financial input for developing and maintaining such a code should come from all sectors. The need for a strong code with the best possible means to improve human rights was stressed.

While most participants recognized the importance of developing Codes of Conduct, several members of the business sector expressed a concern that such a code could result in increased bureaucracy and regulation. They argued that any code must be efficient to administer.

In addition to the development of Codes of Conduct, another suggestion for



business to effectively play a role in protecting human rights was to promote parallel issues - such as literacy, communications and health - that help strengthen human rights. The ability of the business community to promote such issues at a local level overseas was stressed, and it was suggested that there is a need to raise awareness in the business community of their skills in this area.

The need to develop greater communication and dialogue among international businesses was felt to be another important goal for business. This dialogue could promote the sharing of their successes and failures in improving human rights.

In addition to the role business can play in promoting human rights the small group discussions also illustrated that there is a role for the Canadian government as well. Participants from the business community clearly indicated, however, that the role of government should not involve legislation or regulation, but should be limited to the provision of guidelines and incentives for protecting human rights.

One of the suggestions for the role of government was the facilitation of fora for discussions among businesses as discussed above. It was felt that the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and Canadian diplomatic offices overseas could be involved in facilitating such fora and in monitoring the activities of Canadian businesses working abroad. Diplomatic offices could also be used as a means to promote dialogue with other governments on human rights issues. It was suggested that a human rights desk should exist in all foreign diplomatic offices, especially in high trade areas involving Canada.

The role of trade missions such as "Team Canada" was discussed. It was felt that focusing on very specific issues of human rights could be an effective tool for such trade missions rather than taking a global stance or ignoring the issue altogether. It was also stressed that more care should be taken to ensure that future "Team Canada" missions should more accurately reflect the demographic reality of Canada, including more women, aboriginal peoples and other minority groups.

It was also suggested that if we are seeking to improve human rights overseas the Canadian government must take a detailed look at its own domestic human rights record, especially with respect to Canada's aboriginal people. In order to be taken seriously, Canada's promotion of human rights abroad needs to be consistent with its activities in its own back yard.

In addition to the roles of business and government in promoting human rights, the role of individual Canadians was also briefly discussed. The need to educate and engage Canadians as individuals regarding their responsibilities towards human rights was felt to be important. This included their activities in business and as consumers.

Overall, it was felt that developing methods for human rights protection - whether they involve business, government or individuals should include a broad base of

participation. In particular, it was suggested that Canada's aboriginal peoples could play a key role as they have faced analogous issues, such as environmental sustainability, cultural integrity and self-government, to those faced by developing countries where international businesses are engaged. It was also suggested that, especially when dealing with business and human rights issues in the context of APEC, it would be profitable to involve Canada's Asian community in the discussion.

The continued need for dialogue between all of the groups at the Roundtable was discussed and approved. The need to develop consensus was recognized to be a very lengthy, but important, process.

Further deliberations regarding more specific topics as well as regular informal meetings to develop ideas was felt to be vital. The need to do this rapidly to maintain the momentum generated by the Roundtable was also felt to be important.

## **CODES OF CONDUCT - ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

*The Code of Conduct - Issues and Questions Working Paper was prepared by David Low, Mary Yee, Roxanne Baird and Dr. Josephine Smart of the Department of Anthropology, University of Calgary. The Paper was submitted on May 6, 1997.*

The globalization of the market place has stimulated the discussion of creating a comprehensive Code of Conduct also referred to as a Code of Ethics. Many Corporations already have developed their own regulations that define both moral and/or unacceptable behaviour. However, the dilemma for Canadian policy makers is whether Canada should develop a national Code of Conduct to give basic guidelines for international business. The purpose of this preliminary report is to examine some of the existing Codes of Ethics and to give readers a general idea of the salient issues regarding the creation and implementation of such a document.

### **What is a Code of Conduct?**

A Code of Conduct/Ethics has been defined in various ways. According to Steven Weller "Codes of Ethics are similar to laws in that both contain certain rules to guide future behaviour." It usually also encompasses the following ideas:

- 1) It is a document that often embodies the values and beliefs of a corporation (this corporation may be domestic or international) or country.
- 2) It often is an "aspirational code" where it may describe the intent of the business to follow existing environmental and labour laws.
- 3) It often describes what constitutes inappropriate or unacceptable business practice.

### **Evaluation of Existing Business codes**

In an attempt to gain a better understanding of some of the issues involved in developing a Code of Conduct, we have reviewed the following business codes from major American and Canadian corporations.

- 1) Lockheed Martin
- 2) General Electric
- 3) Nortel
- 4) Petro-Canada
- 5) Norcen
- 6) Ontario Hydro International
- 7) Royal Dutch Shell

- 8) Levi Strauss and Company
- 9) Mortorola

From a preliminary review of these codes the following comments can be made:

- 1) It is clear that there is some common ground shared by all the Codes of Conduct reviewed. This would seem to indicate that there exists the possibility of developing an acceptable standard for all businesses.
- 2) Most of what is commonly expressed in these codes is contained in the Caux Round Table Principles for Business Ethics. We would recommend that this document be consulted and viewed as the starting point for the development of a Code of Conduct for Canada.
- 3) Explicit policies on the issues regarding labour were absent in all but one of the codes reviewed. Similarly, explicit policies regarding the environment were absent.
- 4) Only one company clearly stated that the adherence to its ethical guidelines was a priority to be placed above profits.
- 5) Only four of the reviewed codes provided any sort of framework for ethical decision making.
- 6) The language used by all of the codes reviewed is problematic. Specifically, statements about what a corporation will and will not do in regards to labour and environmental issues were at best vague. An example of this comes from the Caux Round Table itself. "A business should protect and, where possible, improve the environment, promote sustainable development, and prevent the wasteful use of natural resources". The use of the words "should" and "where possible" leave too much room for interpretation.
- 7) Only one of the reviewed codes explicitly defined how it would deal with contractors who did not meet the ethical standards of the company.

### **Recommendations**

- 1) An evaluation of the actual effectiveness of the reviewed codes in dealing with human rights and environmental issues. This would help determine which model(s) have the greatest efficacy.
- 2) An evaluation of the practices of corporations in foreign environments. Specifically, there is a need to investigate how discrepancies in the ethical standards between business partners are resolved or dealt with.

3) In terms of facilitating the development of a standardized Code of Ethics for business, the compilation and analysis of as many existing codes as possible would be beneficial, perhaps by way of the construction and maintenance of a Code of Ethics business data base. This would expedite future research in this area.

4) The development of some criteria by which a code can be evaluated for its potential efficacy in dealing with human rights and environmental issues.

5) The creation of an ethical problem solving model that addresses the difficulties in dealing with conflicting cultural values.

### **Issues and Questions**

1) What exactly are we trying to achieve with a Code of Conduct? Is it to maintain a specific standard of human rights? Or is it simply an outline of the general responsibilities of businesses?

2) Who is it going to apply to?

3) The degree of enforceability. Will the codes be a voluntary or mandatory set of rules and regulations?

4) If it is legally binding, who is going to enforce the Code? What kinds of sanctions will be applied if these standards are not adhered to?

5) Should investment be treated the same as any other business activity and be subject to the same codes of conduct?

a) Would the same code apply to direct and indirect investment? b) What are the moral and ethical responsibilities of investors, where do their responsibilities begin and end?

c) What are the existing codes, both formal and informal that exist in the investment industry?

### **Concluding Observations**

The issues surrounding the development of a Code of Conduct are many and complex. We feel that we have presented some of the key issues that need to be addressed before further steps can be taken towards developing a Code of Conduct for Canadian business. Through the preliminary research conducted so far, we found that there are many people working on the same task, though from different perspectives. As a result a great deal of the research in this area is fragmented.



## INDIGENOUS HERITAGE RIGHTS AND APEC

*The Aboriginal Policy Roundtable on Indigenous Heritage Rights and APEC was held at the Native Law Centre of Canada, University of Saskatchewan, on April 4-6, 1997. Participants included Mildred Poplar from the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Andres Lix Lopez from the Institute of Indigenous Government, Marie Batiste from the University of Saskatchewan, Russel Barsh from the University of Lethbridge.*

The following actions aimed at the economic empowerment of all indigenous peoples in APEC countries should be considered as potential Canadian government initiatives at APEC--in ongoing collaboration with Aboriginal peoples.

1. Launching work on a NAFTA-style "side agreement" on environmental issues. The existing *North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation* (1993), creates a special international commission to promote scientific cooperation, public awareness, training, and stronger environmental standards and machinery in the three NAFTA countries. The Commission can also establish dispute-resolution panels to consider complaints by State Parties that other Parties have failed to adopt--or consistently to enforce--adequate standards for environmental protection.

An even stronger side agreement on the environment could be proposed for APEC: one that explicitly provides for the participation of indigenous peoples (and perhaps other grassroots groups) in APEC regional ecological monitoring, training and research, and in the submission of complaints.

2. Establishing a sub-routine in the existing APEC process on intellectual property rights to seek agreement on the outlines of an APEC model national law on *sui generis* protection for indigenous heritage. This task might best be incorporated into the work that is currently assigned to Australia and should be informed by the draft *Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of the Heritage of Indigenous Peoples* prepared by the UN Special Rapporteur Erica Irene Daes.

Indigenous participation in the process is crucial, and could be arranged--with the least likelihood of resistance by more sensitive countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia--through an expert advisory group convened by the lead economy. It would be wise, with a view to gaining political support within APEC, to emphasize the scale of the potential economic benefits which APEC members could realize, if they tapped the full potential from the knowledge and creativity of indigenous peoples.

3. Establishing a sub-routine in the existing APEC process on intellectual property rights to seek agreement on the importance of standards for identifying or certifying goods as the authentic work or produce of indigenous peoples. This task could be included in the trademark work currently assigned to Thailand and the United States, or to another relevant economy such as Canada (which has some

experience in the Aboriginal-trademark field) or Chile. It is possible to consider a technical role for the International Standards Organization (ISO), as well. ISO standards are likely to play an important and increasing part in the use of certification as a consumer-driven "market mechanism" for protecting cultural and ecological values.

4. The wider ratification of ILO Convention No. 169 would be beneficial for most of the indigenous peoples in the Pacific Rim, since few APEC members come close to satisfying standards for land rights or autonomous self-development. Canada will not be in a position to press this matter officially at APEC as it has not yet ratified the Convention. But Canada could encourage other APEC countries to raise this issue. Mexico, Chile, and the Philippines are strong advocates of the Convention.

5. Canada could encourage some specific mention in the final act of the Vancouver session to the adoption of trade-enhancement measures for indigenous peoples. It would be useful for Canada to bring several prominent Aboriginal business people to Vancouver to raise this point personally, since the real aim of the exercise would be to desensitize APEC members to the empowering of indigenous peoples. It is important to make the point symbolically that indigenous peoples are not inherently opposed to trade or business (although they insist upon the right to trade on fair and agreed terms). This could help pave the way for progress on the previous recommendations.

6. A general point may be made at Vancouver about the need for broader non-governmental input into the process--not only for indigenous peoples, but other social groups which are also likely to be profoundly affected by regional economic integration. This is a "motherhood" issue for Canada, which has advocated wider NGO access to other intergovernmental negotiations in the past, such as the various world conferences sponsored by the United Nations. Canada might consider proposing the establishment of an APEC Non-Governmental Advisory Council to complement the existing Business Advisory Council, or else an expansion of the existing Business Advisory Council to include all the "Major Groups" identified by the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development--indigenous peoples, women, youth, farmers, scientists and local authorities.

### **Collaborative arrangements**

The foregoing initiatives will depend for their credibility and quality on the integrity of the collaborative process within Canada. Measures to strengthen the practical, representative involvement of Aboriginal people at technical levels of the APEC process could be (and should be) launched at once.

Participants felt strongly that there has been a lack of genuine partnership in past



consultations, while acknowledging the serious challenges Canada faces working with diverse Aboriginal nations and political organizations. The mutual benefits of real partnership in the APEC context justify a much larger investment of effort--on both sides--than has been customary in the past.

1. First and foremost, there is a critical need to inform more Aboriginal people about APEC. Aboriginal people are still trying to understand NAFTA, and have minimal access to analyses of the next stage of regional integration represented by APEC. A simple factsheet-style pamphlet accompanied by a 20-minute video would be a useful first step, and could be prepared well in advance of the Vancouver summit, by Aboriginal people, with assistance from the NFB, CIDA, and/or DFAIT. A second roundtable at Vancouver--coordinated by the Institute of Indigenous Government and UBCIC --would also enhance Aboriginal awareness and involvement, and might usefully be given financial support by DFAIT.

2. DFAIT should recognize that Aboriginal people in Canada express themselves, and exercise their creativity through scientific and academic institutions, professional and business associations, and grassroots organizations as well as elected bodies. Inclusivity, taking full advantage of this diversity, is the key to an effective and accountable collaborative process.

This indicates an advisory body that is open-ended, flexible--and enjoys adequate financial support to maintain a small secretariat for research, logistics, education and exchanges of information with other sectors such as business.

3. Aboriginal peoples will expect to be included in Canada's official delegations to relevant APEC meetings at all levels, both in technical and political capacities. A small but growing number of countries, including the Nordic Group, Colombia and Bolivia, have begun to include indigenous experts and national leaders in their delegations to intergovernmental meetings of special concern. This practice could only serve to enhance Canadian credibility and help build trust between Ottawa and Aboriginal peoples. An inclusive, robust advisory process would facilitate the selection of Aboriginal attaches.

4. Aboriginal peoples in Canada can strengthen the quality and weight of their contributions to APEC by coordinating closely with indigenous peoples in other APEC countries, many of whom as yet possess little information on the APEC process, while others have useful access and influence with their governments. There is an existing indigenous telephone information network, housed at the University of Lethbridge, which already reaches organizations in APEC countries, and at modest expense could arrange telephone consultations across the region on an ongoing basis. DFAIT could consider providing operating funds for this purpose.

The Roundtable made 26 further recommendations for the Canadian government and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, on APEC policies.



## **WOMEN AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA**

*The Roundtable on Women and Economic Development in Asia was held at the University of New Brunswick in Saint John on March 13, 1997. Participants included Richard V. Gorham, former Canadian Ambassador to China, Cathy Wright from the Saint John Human Development Council, Najma Sharif from Saint Mary's University, Xie Xiaoyan from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China.*

Participants agreed that the policy options identified in this panel discussion need to be understood against the background and within the context of certain characteristics of current Canadian foreign policy and its implementation. These are:

### **\* The Discrepancy between Women in Development (WID) as Policy and Women in Development (WID) as Reality**

Too often options evolve narrowly from existing policy frameworks without considering the need for a "reality check" on the latter. Consequently, these options tend to perpetuate the weaknesses in current policy. The consensus was that WID represented a well-developed Canadian policy that has generated a lot of "paper", but that the WID reality in no way measures up to the policy.

### **\* The Two-Pronged thrust of Canadian Policy**

Canada's foreign policy seeks to promote trade on the one hand, and poverty reduction/human rights on the other. A connection between these two orientations is often advanced. If a country adds increased efficiency to higher rates of economic growth, the results will include a better distribution of wealth, increased equality, less poverty, and decreased marginalization.

While there is nothing inherently wrong with having more than one orientation, it was pointed out that the connection has been used to justify the mismeasure of development. Participants agreed that development and economic growth are not synonymous.

### **\* The Generic Nature of Foreign Policy**

By definition foreign policy must reflect Canada's position toward other countries without recognition of individual country differences and priorities. This means things such as the WID policy must be generic, even though the application of this policy must be tailored to national, political, and cultural specificities.

The generic nature of foreign policy makes it difficult to develop policy alternatives based on more specific national and regional activities. Lessons learned from WID

in Asia, for example, may not easily translate into policy level alternatives applicable elsewhere.

While Country Development Policy Frameworks (CDPF) are helpful in bridging the generic gap, they often fall back on generalities when it comes to the application of the WID policy.

#### **\* The Emphasis on Results Based Management (RBM)**

While this approach is a welcome addition to the demonstration of accountability of specific foreign policy initiatives, RBM has two characteristics which make it a difficult tool to use in assessing WID activities. First, it tends to rely on quantifiable indicators, and second it assumes that project results will emerge within a short time frame. Thus RBM does not correspond well with WID which often strives to achieve qualitative changes often emerging in the medium to long term.

Given this context, the participants identified 9 points around which a modified Canadian foreign Policy orientation to gender could be developed:

- (1) The WID concept is outmoded, a 1970s orientation which came to focus on women as a tool in advancing a country's development, especially its economic progress. An alternative approach, "Development for Women," was rejected because it implied women were clients of the development process rather than contributors. Participants recommended that the gender aspects of Canadian Foreign Policy be modified to emphasize Participatory Development.
- (2) The type of economic progress coming to characterize more and more of Asia is having negative consequences for women, even as they derive economic benefits. An alternative version of Canada's gender policy must address the increase in job insecurity and the parallel shrinkage of the social safety nets which in many developing countries have a direct and negative impact on the lives of women and their children.
- (3) Economically developing countries are seeing the emergence into the public consciousness of a number of long-ignored "social pathologies" having significant consequences for women and children. For the most part, these countries lack the policies, programs and appropriately trained personnel to address these issues. The gender aspects of Canadian foreign policy should be expanded to include an emphasis on family and domestic issues exacerbated by economic development including, divorce, desertion, abandonment and family violence.
- (4) Attempts to achieve gender equality are often frustrated by local social, cultural and/or religious barriers. The gender equality/WID emphases in Canadian foreign policy need to be recast to recognize the vast diversity of situations within which

they are expected to have impacts. This extends as well to a recognition of the lack of cultural homogeneity within any given country.

(5) The achievement of gender equality is as much an economic issue as a socio-cultural one. Given the increased importance of economic development, Canada's gender equality policy must emphasize equal access to capital and technology, especially within the microcredit and micro-enterprise contexts.

(6) There is a need to break the association between gender equality and so-called "women's issues". In order to encourage a broad-based move toward gender equality, Canadian policy must extend the concept to all areas of life, including, but not limited to reconciling the apparent contradiction between economic efficiency and gender equality.

(7) In Asian countries it is becoming increasingly obvious that labour is polarizing into two categories: the highly skilled and the unskilled, with an increasing demand for the former. However, for women, while their rate of labour force participation is increasing, they are becoming marginalized into the part-time, casual and less-skilled segment. The importance Canada's foreign policy attaches to gender equality must be directed toward securing equality in job opportunities, education, political participation, and civil rights.

(8) The system of social indicator data collection in many Asian countries does not allow for easy tracking and quantification of the advancement of women. It is imperative that Canada's support of gender equality be grounded on a sound statistical basis. There is, therefore, the need to restate Canada's commitment in a manner that encourages developing countries to collect gender segregated data on those social indicators most useful in demonstrating progress toward equality.

(9) Due to the emphasis placed on economic growth, and the resulting changes to the structure of labour (as noted above) in many Asian countries, a number of the advancements won by women during the 1980s are in danger. In order to sustain the move to gender equality, Canada's foreign policy must encourage the commitment of money and other resources to (a) the direct support of women's groups, and (b) the implementation of policies and laws needed to maintain supportive socio-cultural, economic and political environments.



## **OPEN MARKETS, OPEN MEDIA ?**

*The Roundtable on Open Markets, Open Media was hosted by the International Media and Policy Alternatives Centre (IMPAC). The event was held in Vancouver on March 21, 1997, and drew on journalists and academics from Canada and Indonesia. These included Patrick Brown, CBC TV Asia Correspondent, Andreas Harsono, Jakarta Correspondent for the Bangkok Nation, Iain Simpson, BBC Radio Asia Correspondent, Frank Koller, Canadian Committee for the Protection of Journalists.*

Participants addressed the question of whether trade liberalization is leading to freer, more open and independent media in the Asia Pacific region. They were asked to address this question from a variety of perspectives, including:

- \* factors which may be contributing to the development of free media in the region;
- \* factors which may be limiting this development;
- \* the role of journalists, media ownership, and Canadian foreign policy in supporting free media.

Based on their deliberations, participants identified options and strategies for policy change.

### ***Policy Options***

What are the ways to expand space (stop shrinkage) for free media/expression/dissenting voices?

#### **I) Canadian Government**

- \* Use trade linkages to promote Canadian values through "Constructive Engagement."
- \* Take advantage of entry points provided by APEC. eg. "Free flow of information" should be interpreted as all kinds of information. Business can be brought into the discussion by emphasizing "transparency."
- \* Take advantage of "unused levers." eg. Canada's linkages with the public broadcasting system and regulatory commission of Malaysia.
- \* Offer governments alternatives to "public embarrassment". These could include proposing workable alternatives to the status quo, or flexible approaches to

regulation.

- \* Raise the public profile of these issues. Explore options, such as labelling and boycotting, that will draw attention to the rights context at the point of production.
- \* Support educational scholarships and language exchanges.
- \* Encourage journalists to cover non-official stories in the context of APEC, eg. child labour, worker's rights. Ensure maximum access to APEC information and meetings. Provide detailed and timely briefings to the press.
- \* Help expand electoral processes abroad and actively protect journalists.
- \* Expand the flow of relevant information to government officials.

## **2) Journalists and their Organizations**

- \* Undertake basic training programs in accuracy, responsibility and ethics.
- \* Support the development of new technologies within partner countries as a way of keeping touch and fostering links.
- \* Encourage and facilitate South-South linkages.
- \* Engage in union to union linkages.
- \* Build links with existing networks and partner organizations.
- \* Explore the possibility of developing an exchange program for media executives.
- \* Develop internal education for Canadian journalists' organizations.

## **3) Business**

- \* Enter into a dialogue with business; get business support for transparency and freedom of information.
- \* Encourage Canadian businesses to follow the same ethical standards abroad as they do at home.
- \* Explore the possibilities of tools such as a fair trade mark, and codes of conduct.
- \* Target egregious examples of ILO convention violations.



## ***Wrap-up***

Steve Lee, Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development, thanked everyone for taking the time to attend the roundtable and provide such a rich discussion. He also asked participants to consider why Canada should be promoting free media in Asia. He pointed out that the relationship between the media and society is complex, and asked rhetorically, which comes first, free media or a free society. He said that freedom of the media and of opinion, and of journalists has to lead somewhere. He noted that many of the options suggested for promoting free media were "highly interventionist".

Shauna Sylvester, IMPAC, closed the session by thanking the participants, speakers and the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development for their support. She outlined the process of how the ideas raised in the roundtable will be carried forward into the development of an international symposium.

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