



FOCAL Point

Canada's Spotlight on the Americas

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Canada and Peru Conclude Free Trade Negotiations

On January 26, Canada announced the conclusion of free trade negotiations with Peru, marking another step in the Canadian government's commitment to re-engage with the Americas region. Canada is an important source of foreign direct investment in the Peruvian mining sector, and in 2006, Canada and Peru's two-way merchandise trade totalled \$2.4 billion. The trade agreement included provisions on the environment, biodiversity and corporate social responsibility. This is a first step towards a broader prosperity agenda in the Americas as Canada continues to advance trade interests throughout the region.

The Challenges of Female Entrepreneurship

FOCAL Q&A with the Honourable Helena Guergis, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Q Why did the government establish a 'Businesswomen in Trade' portfolio?

A Over the last 20 years, Canada has seen a 200 per cent increase in the number of women-owned firms. Today, there are over 800,000 women-owned businesses in Canada, contributing billions to our economy.

At the same time, international trade and investment are more important than ever. Thanks to technology, falling trade barriers and an increasingly liberalized global economy, businesses have more opportunities than ever before to succeed in the export market.

While women entrepreneurs face many of the same challenges that men do, they're contending with other, gender-specific challenges, too.

As a former small-business owner myself, this issue is close to my own heart. My job is to be an advocate for these entrepreneurs, and to carry their concerns back to the government to ensure that our policies and programs meet their needs and help them participate and compete effectively in the global marketplace.

Q What are some of the special challenges facing Canadian women in international commerce?

A In March 2007, I travelled across Canada and held roundtables with women entrepreneurs to talk specifically about how the Canadian government can get more women involved in international trade and business.

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Note from the Editor

As we launch our first *FOCALPoint* issue of 2008, the team at FOCAL is looking forward to the many challenges and discussions that will stem from the government's "Americas Strategy" announced last year. Re-engagement with the Americas is critical for Canada to establish an influential role in the Western Hemisphere, and it is time to bring the rest of Canada into the debate. This means moving beyond Ottawa's political circles and opening the discussion to all Canadians. Engaging the private sector, for example, is essential to creating effective policies for corporate social responsibility, capacity-building and positive foreign direct investment. Canada has many important reciprocal ties with Latin American and Caribbean countries, but how many Canadians are actually aware of them?

Our preliminary polling research from 2007 shows that the majority of Canadians agree that Latin America is important for our foreign policy, but there seems to be little awareness among the general public that engagement in the Caribbean is also critical. Canadians are also poorly informed about our shared goals and values with many countries in the Americas.

We especially need more public information on key issues and challenges in the region, such as transnational gangs, human trafficking, domestic violence, economic inequality, poor access to education and the lack of capacity-building programs. For the Americas Strategy to succeed, both the government and civil society must engage the Canadian public in what this new strategy will look like, why it will be important for Canada, and why our involvement must be both sustainable and responsible.

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One example is the various free trade agreements that our government is negotiating in the region. These agreements have raised serious concerns about non-trade issues such as human rights and corporate social responsibility, among others. Indeed, even though such issues are not covered in free trade agreements, the negotiations that accompany trade talks are a prime opportunity to raise these concerns and take advantage of continual interaction with the countries in question. We welcome increased discussion about such concerns at any level and strongly believe that the government must involve all Canadians in the dialogue. While trade agreements can certainly have inequitable effects, we must not, as is too often done, ignore the potential positive impact that these negotiations can have on poverty alleviation programs, environmental concerns and corporate regulations when such issues are adequately addressed. In the upcoming year, FOCAL will be working to research related topics and present policy options that will allow for a more equitable distribution of wealth as well as the protection of human rights and the advancement of education and employment opportunities.

We are also expanding our research programs to look specifically at health and education issues in the Americas, and we will be seeking feedback from our readers and partners on these particular themes. We will work with a range of stakeholders to produce a series of roundtables, policy papers, commentaries and consultations that will allow for a deeper understanding of Latin America and the Caribbean by incorporating perspectives from throughout the region.

In addition to our regular monthly publication, *FOCALPoint* will be launching several thematic editions over the next few months, including specials on media and democracy, trade and development, poverty and inequality, and energy. As always, we welcome article submissions and feedback from our readers on all of these topics.

We expect 2008 to be a very productive year of new ideas, debates and partnerships, and we hope that our readers will join with us in expanding this community that continues to consider and discuss the key economic, political and social issues facing the Americas. 

Rachel Schmidt

Entrepreneurship *(continued from page 1)*

And I just returned from a trade mission to Jamaica and Barbados, where I led a delegation of Canadian businesswomen committed to capturing new opportunities in these exciting Caribbean markets.

Throughout, I've heard many interesting perspectives. Take small businesses, for example. These businesses lead the country in job-creation and are a linchpin in Canada's economic performance. They also stand a greater chance of succeeding if they participate in the export market.

The fact is, women are starting up these businesses at twice the rate of men. But the long-term success of many of these businesses requires engaging international markets.

In this regard, women entrepreneurs in Canada told me they face many of the same challenges as their male counterparts — challenges like international marketing, the cost of developing new markets, and getting the right information to succeed.

Like their male counterparts, they also need a greater knowledge of the many tools that are out there to help them succeed at the global level — tools like Canada's Trade Commissioner Service, which provides a range of business development services both here in Canada and all over the world. At the same time, many feel that their gender is indeed a barrier to global success.

One study found that 75 per cent of female business owners feel that their gender has had an influence on their ability to export. Many cite

lack of respect from male business owners, and a perceived bias against women on the part of financial institutions as key challenges. (See: "Exporting as a Means of Growth for Women-owned Firms" by Dr. Barbara Orser, Allan Riding and JoAnna Townsend in *The Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship*, vol. 17, no. 4, Summer 2004.)

Yet another report found that women-owned firms are not per-

The fact is, women are starting up [small] businesses at twice the rate of men. But the long-term success of many of these businesses requires engaging international markets.

forming as well as male-owned firms. Possible reasons why included a lack of mentors and role models, smaller professional networks, and even a lack of spousal or peer support. (See: "Sustaining the Momentum," synopsis report of research and recommendations stemming from *Sustaining the Momentum: An Economic Forum on Women Entrepreneurs*, Industry Canada and Carleton University's Sprott School of Business, 2005.)

So women entrepreneurs in Canada do indeed face a number of specific challenges.

Q What about women in developing countries?

A Women entrepreneurs in developing countries face serious challenges when it comes to trade. For example, businesswomen in India, Latin America, the Middle East and South Africa are often not taken seriously as business owners. Cultural differences present a further problem. They also face a disadvantage in accessing credit, capital and information. These challenges are exacerbated by poor levels of education and training, and a lack of knowledge of international trade regulations.

Q What is Canada doing to help these women?

A As you know, promoting and protecting women's human rights and gender equality are important parts of Canada's foreign and domestic policies.

Over the years, Canada has become a recognized champion in advancing UN commitments to promote women's human rights and gender equality. It's certainly a commitment that extends to the commercial side.

Many federal organizations — including Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Status of Women Canada (SWC) and Industry Canada (IC) — actively participate in national, regional and international initiatives to develop programs that break down barriers faced by female entrepreneurs.

That includes supporting trade policies that promote opportunities

for small and medium-sized enterprises around the world — through the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) and World Trade Organization (WTO), for example.

CIDA's ACCESS! for African Businesswomen in International Trade program is a good example of a federal program that's having a direct impact. ACCESS! helps African women entrepreneurs by providing them with training, counselling, mentorship and other tools to help them succeed in the global marketplace.

The excellent efforts of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) are another good example. A CIDA-funded "gender specialist" has been recognized by the Bank for her important work in ensuring that gender equality is featured in the Bank's programming. Policy dialogue on gender equality by Canada at the CDB board continues to be instrumental in moving the agenda forward.

Another example is the Jamaica Enterprise Project, an effort to work with the private sector to establish a self-sustaining micro-finance institution — called Micro and Small Enterprise Finance Limited (MEFL) — in collaboration with Bank of Nova Scotia-Jamaica and Kingston Restoration Company. So far, 79 per cent of MEFL loans have been made

to women entrepreneurs.

We're active at the Parliamentary level, as well. In March, DFAIT and CIDA helped the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas organize a trade knowledge workshop for parliamentarians from throughout the hemisphere. The workshop included a module dealing specifically with gender equality, trade and development.

Initiatives and programs like these are clear demonstrations of Canada's commitment to help women entrepreneurs in developing countries share in the many opportunities of a globalized economy.

Q Does the government's re-engagement in the Americas address human rights issues such as gender equality?

A Absolutely. Human rights, democracy, freedom and rule of law are the fundamental values guiding our re-engagement in the Americas. Gender equality more specifically is addressed as part of our commitment to promoting and advancing human rights.


Our commitment to the region is already evidenced by a number of initiatives and programs. Our re-engagement builds on these existing programs and introduces a few more

to offer a co-ordinated, focused and long-term approach.

For example, Canada actively participates in and strongly supports the Inter-American Commission of Women, or CIM, the principal forum in the Americas for generating policies that advance women's rights and gender equality. Over the last six years, Canada has provided \$600,000 in funding to support development training on gender equality through the CIM for several hundred staff at the Organization of American States (OAS).

We also support the Inter-American Program on Women's Rights and Gender Equity and Equality as an important tool for achieving progress and results on gender equality in the region.

Another good example is the Canada-Caribbean Gender Equality Program, which has resulted in excellent progress in fighting gender-based violence through awareness, policy dialogue, legal changes and service provision.

We'll continue to work closely with nations throughout the hemisphere to reinforce the important role played by women, and find new ways to support them in their efforts to succeed in the global economy and contribute to their nations' prosperity. 

Mexican Farmers Protest Lifting of Trade Barriers

Farmers protested throughout Mexico during the month of January, including a march in Mexico City that included thousands of farmers driving tractors and herding cows. The farmers are upset about the lifting of trade barriers in early January under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which for the first time opened Mexico to U.S. exports of traditional foods such as corn and beans. Farmers fear that President Calderón is not doing enough to protect them against subsidized U.S. goods, and they are especially concerned that U.S. farms will start producing white corn — a staple in the Mexican diet. Currently, U.S. corn exports to Mexico are primarily of the yellow variety, which is used as animal feed.

Canada's Role in a Regional Crime Spree

Rachel Schmidt and Carlo Dade

As Mexican drug traffickers and hit men stockpile hand grenades, assault rifles, and grenade launchers, the country's military has been called in to help overwhelmed police forces, a practice becoming more common throughout Latin America. Colombia's military has been fighting a drug war for decades, and Central America is struggling to control the myriad gangs that channel drugs between South and North America.

In El Salvador, the murder rate is now higher than it was during the civil wars. Although Canada does not have such extreme levels of violence, the recent escalation of urban gang activity — including this week's shooting of a well-known drug trafficker in Vancouver — reminds us that we are not immune to organized crime.

While the Canadian government has recently chosen the "Americas" as a foreign policy priority, officials have yet to address our role in the region's alarming crime levels. Debates around governance and prosperity (i.e., democracy and free trade agreements) are plentiful, yet little has been said about one of the most crucial issues confronting

Latin America and the Caribbean: security.

Despite the fact that political violence such as guerrilla warfare has significantly decreased in the region, most Latin American and

Although figures vary, certain trends stand out: with 30 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, the Caribbean currently has the highest murder rate in the world, closely followed by Latin America with 25 homicides per 100,000. In El Salvador, the murder rate is now higher than it was during the civil wars.

Caribbean countries are now seeing even higher levels of violence. Although figures vary, certain trends stand out: with 30 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, the Caribbean currently has the highest murder rate in the world, closely followed by Latin America with 25 homicides per 100,000. (Comparatively, the U.S. murder rate stands at 5.6 per

100,000, while Canada is at 1.85.) Drug trafficking, violent youth gangs, money laundering and prolific domestic violence rank high among the most serious and immediate threats to regional democracy and development. As Canada develops a strategy in the Americas, we need to figure out what to do about security — and we need to do it soon.

Poorly trained and inadequately funded police forces are certainly part of the problem, especially as they face increasingly wealthy and sophisticated armed groups. In a drug bust last year, Mexican police seized US\$205.6 million in cash, an amount close to six per cent of that country's entire military budget.

In mid-January, the Mexican army arrested a senior-level mafia member and three accomplices carrying just shy of US\$1 million in cash. In many countries, the military is taking over from corrupt or ill-equipped police, raising concerns not only about human rights but also about where to turn should the armed forces fail or worse, be co-opted.

Some civilians frustrated by insecurity have embarked on their own form of enforcement, which

includes “social cleansing” operations such as killing street kids, drug addicts, sex workers and other “undesirables.” Wealthy citizens simply hire their own security: in several Latin American countries, private security forces outnumber state police forces. But vigilante justice due to police incompetence is only one part of the story. Estimates by the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank put the cost of crime and violence in the region at over 14 per cent of regional GDP — and the problem is not going away any time soon.

One new effort to combat organized criminal groups and the militarization of policing duties is the creation of Ameripol, Latin America's first regional police force. This is an endeavour in which Canada should play a key role. At a recent FOCAL event, Javier Hernandez, the deputy representative for the UN High Commission on Human Rights in Colombia, emphasized

that military and police forces need “peer training” in human rights — training from other soldiers and police officers rather than civilians. He also stressed that Canadians have the expertise in human rights, minority rights, gender equality and peacekeeping that is needed in Latin American police and military forces.

Such a contribution should not only be seen as an altruistic endeavour. Trans-national crime unavoidably affects Canadians and will continue to do so as criminal groups gain more money, power and global reach. The economic benefits of tackling crime are also clear, as foreign companies are wary of investing in countries known for violence, extortion and targeted killings. According to the 2005 World Bank Development Report, more than 50 per cent of firms in Latin America judge crime to be a serious obstacle to conducting business. The corresponding number for Asia and Af-

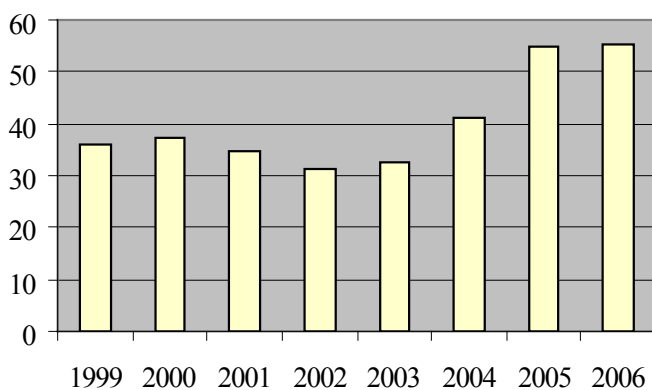
rica was only 25 per cent.

Despite the obvious challenges, reducing violent crime in Latin America and the Caribbean is possible. Significant work is already being done by many international actors, but with the exception of immigration and deportee case work, Canadian security and intelligence agencies are largely absent. We need to address the immediate concerns of ground-level security while also dealing with higher-level, long-term negotiations such as free trade agreements. If we are concerned about improving human rights and economic equality in Latin America and the Caribbean, we must also be concerned about the personal security of the people living and working there. 🌐

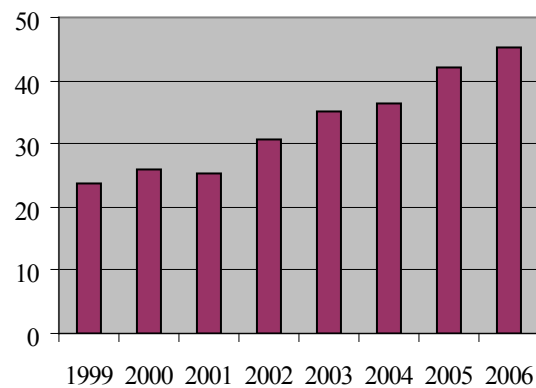
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Homicide Rates (per 100,000 inhabitants) in El Salvador and Guatemala

Homicide Rates in El Salvador



Homicide Rates in Guatemala



Source: *Número de Víctimas y Tasas de Homicidios Dolosos en Guatemala y El Salvador (1999 –2006)*. (Spanish). Observatorio Centroamericano sobre Violencia

Cuba: Waiting for Change

Cristina Warren

Since Fidel Castro “temporarily” turned over power in 2006 to his younger brother, Raúl, due to illness, the aging Cuban leader has essentially disappeared from public view, making only occasional appearances on edited videos and photos. Yet, despite his absence from the public realm, Fidel has taken pains to show that he remains active and alert, publishing articles regularly and holding private meetings with foreign dignitaries such as Hugo Chavez of Venezuela, Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua, Evo Morales of Bolivia, and most recently, Lula da Silva of Brazil, as well as officials from China, Vietnam and Angola.

While the future of Fidel Castro remains unclear, there are signs that he may be trying to prepare Cubans for his ultimate retirement. In a recent article, he acknowledged his growing limitations, saying that he devotes his time to writing because he lacks the physical ability to talk to Cubans directly. “I do what I can: I write,” he said. “This constitutes a new experience for me. Speaking is not the same as writing. Now that I have more time to keep myself informed and to reflect on what I see, I barely have enough time to write.” A statement, read on state television at his request this past December, said that his “fundamental duty is not to cling to public offices, still less to obstruct the ad-

vance of younger people, but to contribute experience and ideas.” This prompted speculation that he may soon step down permanently from Cuba’s presidency.

Such a development would certainly be welcome news to many people both on and off the island who, after nearly 50 years of com-

productivity, as well as his call for a national debate on what to do, suggests that Cuba’s acting president is aware of the popular frustration regarding the shortages and hardships faced by Cubans. It also indicates an awareness that many of the island’s problems are systemic, rather than due primarily to the American economic embargo or “imperialism,” as Fidel has always insisted.

Presumably, Raúl is also aware of the possible destabilizing effects if the government is not seen as trying to improve matters. While so far he has shown reluctance to undertake visible reforms, Raúl’s government keeps sending signals of limited liberalization, including a number of measures to encourage people to express their societal frustrations. Beyond the insinuation of possible economic reform in the near future, ensuing party and work-place meetings have been held to debate the island’s problems, raising a long list of complaints in-

cluding insufficient salaries, obstacles for legal micro-businesses, state tutelage over agrarian cooperatives, foreigner-only areas restricted to Cubans, and even deficiencies in the health and education systems.

In addition, *Juventud Rebelde*, a newspaper intended for Cuban youth, started publishing investigative stories on a range of ills plaguing the country. “The Lives of

While the future of Fidel Castro remains unclear, there are signs that he may be trying to prepare Cubans for his ultimate retirement. Such a development would be welcome news to many people who are anxiously hoping for the start of a new era when Castro no longer dominates Cuban politics.

munist rule under Fidel Castro, are anxiously hoping for the start of a new era when Castro no longer dominates Cuban politics and the country can begin a process of badly needed reforms. Raúl Castro’s acknowledgment in his speech of July 26 — the official anniversary of the start of the revolution — that the economy needed “structural and conceptual changes” in order to raise

Others,” an Oscar-winning movie about the amorality of communist East Germany’s repressive secret services, was included in Havana’s film festival in December. In January, Cuban television aired a 2003 documentary on Havana’s Industriales baseball team – a film that had been held back from the public for almost five years because it included interviews with players who later defected. While Cuba continues its harsh repression of the country’s human rights and dissident groups, the government announced that the country would eventually sign the UN covenants on civil and political rights and on economic, social and

cultural rights, which it steadfastly has refused to do in the past.

Time will tell if Raúl’s will to reform is sincere. A key indicator will be the extent to which Fidel Castro will continue to influence policy (and obstruct meaningful reforms), which so far remains unclear. This is, however, likely to be somewhat clarified over the next three months. In an indication that it is not yet time to count Fidel Castro out of Cuban politics, he was re-elected on January 20 to the National Assembly (in legislative elections in which candidates ran unopposed), where he must hold a seat to be eligible to stay on as chief of the island’s governing

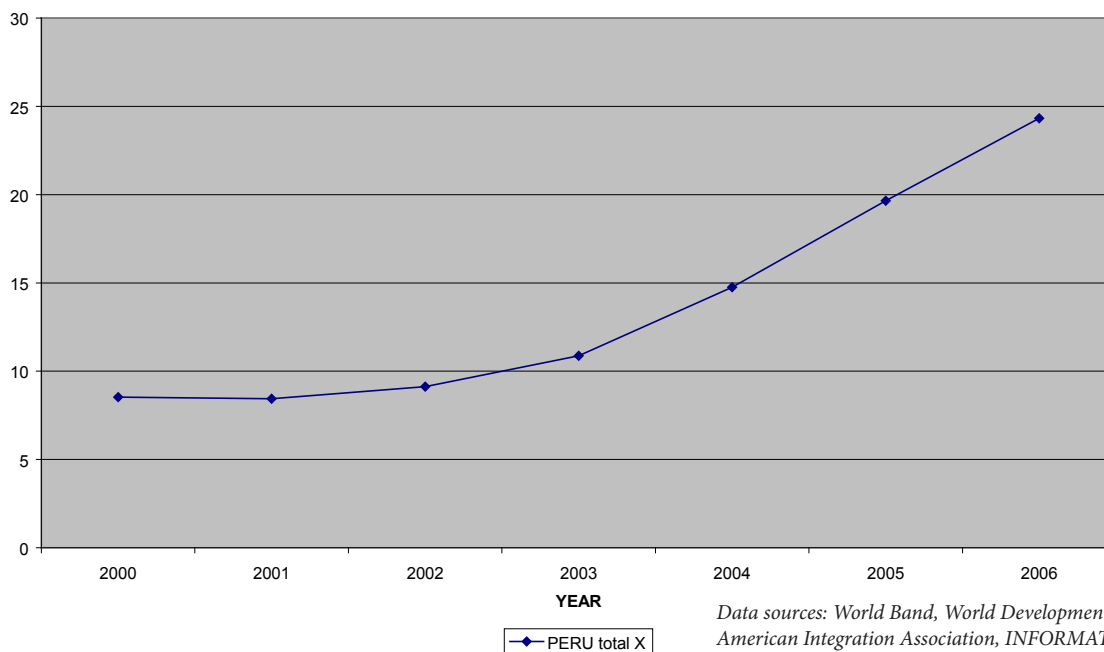
body, the Council of State. The assembly will hold its first session on February 24, during which it will approve the executive Council of State, and confirm whether the elder Castro will continue as Cuba’s head of state or be formally succeeded by his brother, or perhaps even by a younger leader. Whatever the outcome, hopefully Cuba will move out of its political limbo over the coming months. 🌐

Cristina Warren is the director of FOCAL’s Research Forum on Cuba and can be reached at cwarren@focal.ca.

Trade Figures for Thought

Peru’s economy has grown consistently over the last few years, with exports of goods and services playing a key role. From 2003 to 2007 the country’s trade balance surplus went from a meagre US\$21 million, to almost US\$1.2 billion. Exports, as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product, increased from 17.7 per cent to more than 26 per cent in the same period, signalling a re-orientation of the Peruvian economy. An even more significant increase can be found in the Peruvian exports to Canada, which went from representing 1.2 per cent of Peru’s total exports in 2003, to more than six per cent in 2006. Based on this trend, and with the newly agreed free trade agreement between the two countries, the opportunities for the Andean nation seem unlimited.

PERU TOTAL EXPORTS
(in US\$ billions)



Alternative Development Approaches: A Conversation with Brazil's Gilberto Gil

Racquel Smith

Gilberto Gil has been the Brazilian Minister of Culture since 2003. His iconic status, however, mostly comes from being a Grammy-award winning musician, friend of fellow legendary singer Caetano Veloso and a cohort of Bob Marley in the social consciousness movement of the 1960s and 1970s. The political content of his musical lyrics offended Brazil's military dictatorship, and he was jailed in 1968 and exiled to London in 1969. His political career began in the early 1990's in his native Bahia in Salvador, a northeastern province of Brazil with a predominantly afro-descendent population. As Minister of Culture, Mr. Gilberto is the ideal figurehead for Brazil's promotion of alternative development approaches, such as cultural industries and public-private partnerships. Alternative models are only just penetrating the mainstream of development policy and practice, and many say that this is largely because of Brazil. In this interview, Minister Gil talks about some of these models with Racquel Smith, FOCAL's project manager for governance, civil society and afro-latino programming.

RS: What preparation or special insight did you derive from your background that is important to you in your job as the minister of culture?

GG: My experience with music and performance helped to inform the

relationship with the public. The relationship with audiences with broad and collective expectations gave me a sense of being able to share impulses, ideas, concepts and feelings with my people. We have to give room for our feelings, for our sentiments, for the boiling dimension that we have inside of our selves.

In Brazil, we decided that we should start by opening discussions

What's culture? It's a right, first of all. A right to exchange experiences, exchange languages, traditions, exchange acts and facts. It is citizenship. It is a right to be individuals as institutions. Any individual is an institution. Any individual is a piece of art.

about culture in Brazil. That was one of [the Lula administration's] first projects — opening discussions about what the issues were: the new ones, the suspected ones, the unsuspected ones, the traditional ones and the unexpected and untraditional ones. And we decided that everything that occurred to us was valid because we faced a formidable country of extraordinary diversity, in racial, cultural, and political terms, in everything. So there was a lot to look for and at.

RS: Like alternatives?

GG: Yes, alternatives. We should be open to that. And this openness to the concept of culture was central to that in Brazil. What's culture? It's a right, first of all. A right to exchange experiences, exchange languages, traditions, exchange acts and facts. It is citizenship. It is a right to be individuals as institutions. Any individual is an institution. Any individual is a piece of art.

Any individual is a cultural body. We looked at culture in that sense, first. We also looked at culture as a symbolic universe. The interchange of individuals, of languages and everything creates an atmosphere that is evaporating all the time — like a spirit. So culture is a symbolic spirit. It is the national soul.

Culture is also a system of doing things, of selling things, of buying things. It is an economy.

RS: Which brings us to the intersection of the idea of individuals as cultural bodies, of culture as a symbolic universe, and the idea of culture as economy.

GG: Yes, with those three elements as our guidelines we started establishing the programs and projects integrating those three points of view.

RS: And people are starting to think

about replicating this model of social and economic empowerment through culture to tackle societal problems throughout the region. In societies where crime and violence are a problem, for example, the observation has been made that at the root is deep youth discontent that plays out in societies facing "identity crises" in the face of globalization. Holding on to and deriving value from culture, being able to sustain yourself, your livelihood and dignity from it, just might be an option to a cycle...

GG: ...An option to a cycle of engagement in negativity. And so starts a cycle of engagement in positive things. Culture provides a substitute.

RS: *You also demonstrate a lot of faith in programs to encourage youth and civic development, social entrepreneurship, etc. Why do you think these things are important? What's working?*

GG: These kinds of programs are important for two main reasons. First, we have observed that neither the markets, on one hand, nor the state governments on the other, have by themselves been able to solve society's problems. So we have to engage civil society — individuals and communities, the creative and social bodies — in the processes of supporting and sustaining themselves so as to complement the work that is done by the market, and the work that is done by the state. Especially in places where both state and market have drastically failed in terms of attending basic needs, such

as education, health, environment, human development, justice. Brazil is an experimental base for this engagement of people. We have to empower people, to work at the level of self-esteem, to encourage them to organize themselves. We are entering a "people's period" of history.

Globalization is inevitable and irresistible. It is curiosity – an impulse towards the unknown. Globalization can be a process of exploitation from a certain point of view. But it can also be a process of discoveries, of novelties, of initiatives and innovations.

RS: *And increasingly more non-traditional partnerships with civil society seem to be founded on that premise and benefiting from it. Take some of the public-private partnerships pioneered in Brazil, such as the creative commons concept. What are some of the factors that seem to work out in these relationships?*

GG: The first requisite is the consciousness by the market and private companies of the limits to attending everyone's needs. The second consideration is that the voice of the people is increasingly becoming louder. People demand that there be a social dimension to private sector actions. The two must converge. The interest of the people and the interest of enterprises converge to-

wards the concept of social responsibility.

There is the recent example of the mayor of Bogota who initiated a very fruitful public-private partnership by saying to the private sector: Lend us one or two of your best executives for one or two years. We don't want your money; just lend us your human capacities...

RS: *Your vision is very cosmopolitan, or open to giving and receiving from a wide variety of perspectives. In tune with a more expansive definition of globalization, perhaps, that requires people and societies to be open, not always without resistance.*

GG: Globalization is inevitable and irresistible. It is curiosity – an impulse towards the unknown. Globalization can be a process of exploitation from a certain point of view. But it can also

be a process of discoveries, of novelties, of initiatives and innovations, of going places in order to influence other people's lives.

It is as a consequence of globalization that we must, and because of globalization that we can, approach things in a more global manner so as to find solutions. This is one of the characteristics of people's history. One of the slogans of politics in general is that "people know what they want." But I used to say, and I included it in one of my songs, "people also want what they don't know." 🌍

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Defining Canada's Role in the World

Jason Diceman

A nation's global activities are carried out by far more actors than just the government. Individuals, private companies and not-for-profit organizations all travel, trade, collaborate, and in many ways interact with one another, representing their home country through their words and deeds around the world. Clearly, these actions go beyond national policy and regulation, and a new project called *Canada's World* now aims to redefine Canada's international role with bottom-up citizen dialogue rather than top-down government policy.

Public consultation on policy is already common practice for the Canadian government (see www.consultingcanadians.gc.ca). These requests for comment, however, frequently gather input that is more representative of lobbyist efforts than of well-informed public opinion. Alternatively, there is a growing model for gathering intelligent

and representative public input by using citizen dialogues (e.g., juries, panels, councils, and assemblies of citizens), where randomly selected people learn about a topic and come to considered recommendations through facilitated deliberation. The B.C. and Ontario governments both used citizen assemblies to author recommendations for electoral reform, and Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN) lists many citizen dialogues that they have conducted since 1999, including the Romanow Commission on the Future of Health Care.

Yet, unlike most previous dialogues, the goal of *Canada's World* is not to directly change specific government policy. Instead, the goal is to change the perspectives of all actors involved with international decisions, including the private sector, the public sector, NGOs, and individuals. The project aims to engage Canadians in developing a new

common vision for Canada's role in the world and to share this vision with decision-makers who can help make it a reality.

The *Canada's World* project is independent of any government agency and will be launched in early February 2008 with a national poll. The project will then continue by conducting eight to nine regional dialogues across Canada on a variety of themes including climate change, shifting global powers, diversity and transnationalism, global inequality, the communications revolution, international law, indigenous rights and the power of cities. Each dialogue will include 30 participants recruited by EKOS polling firm who are over the age of 18 and screened for representative demographics (e.g., urban/rural mix, field of work, age, gender, and ethnicity). Special outreach will be conducted to include hard-to-reach populations, with an emphasis on connect-

Colombian Drug Lord Found Dead

Colombia's most wanted drug baron, Wilber Varela, has been found dead in a vacation home in the Venezuelan city of Merida. Despite having a \$5 million bounty on his head, officials say that Varela was likely killed by his own men. Varela was the leader of the Norte del Valle drug cartel, which succeeded Pablo Escobar's Medellín cartel when Escobar was killed. Like Escobar, stories of Varela's brutality had made him a household name in Colombia. According to Colombia's police chief, Varela was a former police officer who entered the drug trafficking business as a hired killer. Last year, officials captured the other three leaders of Varela's cartel, and the drug lord's death now makes it likely that his cartel will quickly be taken over by other drug traffickers.

ing with ethnocultural and diaspora communities, and ensuring that youth take leading roles in organizing the engagement of other young people. After reading the specially authored Citizens' Dialogue Handbook to inform them on topics related to Canada's role in the world, the selected citizens will participate in a two-day face-to-face facilitated discussion. Participants will debate various approaches, question experts, make trade-offs about key policy choices, and together author their own set of policy options. The outcome of each dialogue will be recorded in wiki software that allows participants to review and correct any inaccuracies.

The strength of the citizen dialogue model is that participants are neither elected with a mandate, hired by any outside group to promote a position, nor self appointed with a fixed agenda. They have no clients or constituencies and thus are free to engage with the various perspectives and to modify their own position as they deliberate with their peers. Like a court jury, the citizen dialogue model aims to be independent, impartial and rational — in strong contrast to the parliamentary system, which is partisan, heavily influenced by lobbyists and shaped by popular media. Unlike a jury, which is forced into a guilty or not guilty decision, citizen dialogues are open ended to produce any statements they see fit to address the questions presented.

There are, of course, several weaknesses to the model. The greatest of these is the potential for bias or incompetence in the creation of educational materials and selection of process facilitators. The editing of the handbook and the choice of pre-

senters and facilitators could drastically undermine the sensibility and representative value of the dialogue. Transparency in decision making and the application of independent evaluations help address this challenge, but as an emerging practice, clear standards to improve legitimacy are still lacking. There is also debate on whether average citizens are competent enough to address policy questions; and without elections, what holds them to account? With the same breath, however, one can ask whether elected politicians and their appointees are oriented to make decisions in the best interest of the citizenry. The record on both questions is certainly not clear.

Our world needs more democracy success stories where the public is led by its own common voice discovered through informed deliberation. *Canada's World* could be one of those success stories. The question is: Will it be considered legitimate? And if so, will it have influence? Citizen dialogues are still considered new and experimental and are thus open to criticism regarding potential bias and insufficiency. Of course, the voices of politicians are known to be influenced by lobbyists, insiders and personal agendas, but their legitimacy and influence are maintained by tradition and institutional structures. Hopefully *Canada's World* will help build new policy traditions that are created by the citizens themselves. 🌍

Jason Diceman is a stakeholder engagement consultant, the newest member of Lura Consulting and a board member of the Canadian Community for Dialogue and Deliberation (C2D2).

Disappearing Amazon: What's to Blame?

The National Institute for Space Research of Brazil (INPE) announced that deforestation of the Amazon over the last months of 2007 was higher than usual. The loss of about 3,235 sq km during the last five months of the year was paralleled by an increase in monthly deforestation rates, from 243 sq km in August to 948 sq km in December. The Environment Ministry cautions that, as more detailed satellite images are studied, the amount of forest cleared could actually be about double that reported.

The increase has occurred despite government attempts to stop the process through legislation, fines and policing, and is likely due to rising commodity prices of certain crops such as soy. Cattle grazing and illegal logging also contribute to deforestation. Critics, however, say that the Environment Ministry has made no structural improvements such as acquiring helicopters and maps for better enforcement of protective legislation. Furthermore, environmentalists argue that laws are not the answer, but rather disincentives to producers would be more effective.

Protecting Land Rights: The Effects of Private Investment in Indigenous Territories

Omaira Mindiola

Given that the indigenous view of development is linked to an intimate relationship with the earth and self-knowledge, the adoption of free market schemes for economic enhancement often has a negative impact on native populations. The perception that indigenous people gain equitable benefits from private investment in their land, for example, has weak positive connotations within the hegemonic models of development. This is especially true of mining expansion in indigenous territories, where competition for rights to the land and its resources places indigenous peoples in a starkly disadvantaged position.

Arguably, land is the only secure heritage on which indigenous people can depend for their survival. As the old indigenous adage says: "The land does not belong to Man but Man belongs to the land."

Displacement caused by civil wars and the extractive industry, in addition to tearing the social fabric, limits the economic opportunities of communities that depend on access to the land and its resources. For example, Guatemala and Colombia have been the scene of armed conflicts whose origins are found in unequal land distribution where public sector actors fought for possession and control of the land. In both situ-

ations, aboriginals and afro-descendants have been the most vulnerable populations and have borne the most serious consequences.

In 2005, the International Coalition for Access to Land urged the Assembly of Santa Cruz to revitalize agrarian reform policies and to promote reforms of the rural sector not only from a standpoint of the eco-

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conomic value of the land, but from that of its social, environmental, historical and symbolic value as well.

In practice, the majority of new agrarian reforms promote land ownership on an individual basis. Since the 1990s, the World Bank has pushed the "agrarian reform through market forces" model to solve the negative effect of high concentration of land ownership in Latin America. In Guatemala, the

"land market" was adopted as a solution to the agrarian problem following the Structural Adjustment Program prescribed in the Peace Accords of 1996. A study conducted by the National Coordinator of Rural Organizations (CNOO) and the Coordination of NGOs and Cooperatives (CONGCOOP) to evaluate "Fontierras" (the model of market access to land in Guatemala) revealed irregularities and limitations of the mechanisms for such land access and asked for greater intervention by the state.

In Colombia, the land market model has been made more obscure through legislative reforms. Among these, Law 30 for Rural Development (2007) was rejected by afro-descendent and indigenous organizations who considered it a threat to their legitimate right to territory, recognized by the 1991 Constitution. Furthermore, this law was the subject of


intense debates in Congress until articles favouring armed groups in the legalization of land taken from peasants and indigenous peoples through violence were eliminated from the document. According to *El Espectador*, a Colombian magazine, there are 2.6 million illegally-expropriated hectares of land and 3.5 million displaced persons in Colombia. Given this complex situation, indigenous and afro-descendent popula-

tions, who represent 28 per cent of displaced households, will not see the land conflict resolved until peace accords are reached.

If not the land, then what will guarantee the social and cultural survival of indigenous populations in Latin America? Corporations as well as governments argue that mining brings development and ends poverty, but they do not say for whom this development works. On the other hand, indigenous peoples insist that mining makes them poorer, as it displaces them from their territory, weakens their social structures and reduces their economic base. According to the Inter-American Development Bank, the economy of indigenous populations is primarily one of reciprocity and self-sufficiency with few monetary transactions — values that have enabled indigenous peoples to

confront material poverty and find alternatives for survival.

As a peasant from Majaz, Peru said recently: “Our agriculture is the best thing in our lives because it is sustainable, while mining is temporary, brings us problems and is not ours.” Indigenous populations do not want development that throws them into the informal economy or that submits them to the discriminatory employment conditions of the urban formal sector. Employment that companies offer to local communities, such as manual labour, is short term and in no way compensates for the negative impact on their right to territory. In addition, as Cristina Echevarria states in *Aglomeraciones Mineras y Desarrollo en América Latina* (2002), the mining industry is subject to the life cycle of extractive activity and market cycles. Given the unsustainable practices of

mining in the long term, it is necessary to support other productive sectors as a safeguard against mine closings. Corporate Social Responsibility can play an important role in this by providing a plan for local development in which communities participate actively together with local authorities. Ultimately, as recommended by the expert seminar on the Millennium Development Goals (2006), the recognition of indigenous institutions in the structure of decentralized national governments is an essential requisite for indigenous contribution to the economy, the democratic process and the development of their countries. 

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Protegiendo los derechos a la tierra: Los resultados de la inversión privada en los territorios de los pueblos indígenas

Omaira Mendiola

Dado que la visión indígena del desarrollo está ligada a la íntima relación con la tierra y el conocimiento propio, la adopción de esquemas de libre mercado para un mejoramiento económico les resulta a los indígenas impactante en forma negativa. La percepción de la equidad en los beneficios a pueblos indígenas provenientes de las inversiones en sus territorios, por ejemplo, tiene una débil connotación positiva en el

modelo de desarrollo hegemónico. Es el caso de la expansión minera en territorios indígenas, donde la competencia por el derecho a la tierra y sus recursos colocan a los pueblos indígenas en franca desventaja al perder la tierra.

La tierra es el único patrimonio seguro del cual depende la supervivencia de los pueblos indígenas. Como dice la sabiduría indígena: “La tierra no pertenece al hombre sino el hombre pertenece a la tier-

ra.”

El desplazamiento causado por las guerras civiles y las industrias extractivas, además de romper el tejido social, limitan las oportunidades económicas de las comunidades que dependen del acceso a la tierra y sus recursos. Por ejemplo, Guatemala y Colombia han sido escenarios de conflictos armados que tienen su origen en la desigual distribución de la tierra y donde han estado involucrados actores del sector privado

en la lucha de posesión y dominio de las tierras. En ambas situaciones, los indígenas y afro-descendientes han sido la población más vulnerable y los que han soportado las más graves consecuencias.

La Coalición Internacional para el Acceso a la Tierra pidió en la Asamblea de Santa Cruz (2005) revitalizar las políticas de reforma agraria y promover reformas del sector rural con un enfoque no sólo desde el valor económico de la tierra sino también desde su valor social, medioambiental, histórico y simbólico.

En la práctica la mayoría de las nuevas reformas agrarias promueven la posesión de la tierra a título individual. Desde la década del noventa el Banco Mundial ha impulsado el modelo de “reforma agraria asistida por el mercado” para solucionar el efecto negativo de la alta concentración de la tierra en América Latina.

En Guatemala se adoptó el mercado de tierra como solución al problema agrario desde la política de Ajuste Estructural reflejado en el Acuerdo de Paz de 1996. Un estudio realizado por la Coordinadora Nacional de Organizaciones Campesinas (CNOC) y la Coordinación de ONG y Cooperativas (CONG-COOP) para evaluar “Fontierras” (el modelo de mercado y de acceso a la tierra en dicho país) reveló irregularidades y limitaciones en el funcionamiento de los mecanismos para el acceso a la tierra y demandó una mayor intervención del estado.

En Colombia la figura del mercado de tierra ha sido más velada a través de reformas legislativas. Una de ellas es la Ley 30 de 2007 de Desarrollo Rural que fue rechazada por las organizaciones Indígenas y

afro-descendientes por considerarla una amenaza a su derecho legítimo al territorio reconocido en la Constitución de 1991. Además, según el Espectador de Junio 16 de 2007, la Ley fue objeto de intensos debates en el Congreso de la Republica hasta lograr eliminar artículos que favorecerían a grupos armados en la legalización de las tierras arrebatadas a campesinos e indígenas a través de la violencia. En el mismo magazín se puede leer que en Colombia hay 2.6 millones de hectáreas de tierras apropiadas ilegalmente y 3.5 millones de desplazados. Con este panorama, los pueblos indígenas y afro-descendientes, quienes representan el 28 por ciento de los hogares desplazados, no verán resuelto el conflicto de tierras antes de un acuerdo de paz.

Si no es la tierra, ¿cuál será entonces el medio que garantizará la permanencia social y cultural de la población indígena en Latinoamérica? Tanto las corporaciones como el gobierno sostienen que la minería trae desarrollo y acaba con la pobreza pero no dicen para quién es este desarrollo. Por otra parte, los Pueblos Indígenas sostienen que la minería los vuelve más pobres porque los desplaza de su territorio, debilitando así su estructura social y reduciendo la base de su economía.

Según el Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo la economía de la población indígena es primordialmente de reciprocidad y autoconsumo y es poco monetarizada, valores que han permitido a los pueblos indígenas enfrentar la pobreza material y encontrar alternativas de sobrevivencia.

Un campesino de Majaz en el Perú dijo: “nuestra agricultura es lo mejor de nuestra vida porque es sostenible, mientras que la minería

es temporal y nos deja problemas y no es nuestra.” Los Pueblos Indígenas no quieren un desarrollo que los arroje a la economía informal o los someta a las condiciones salariales discriminatorias del sector formal en la zona urbana. El empleo que ofrecen las empresas a las comunidades locales, como fuerza de trabajo no calificado, es de corto plazo y de ninguna manera compensa los impactos contra el derecho al territorio. Además, como dice Cristina Echavarría en *Aglomeraciones Mineras y Desarrollo en América Latina* (2002), la industria minera está sometida al ciclo de vida de la actividad extractiva y a los ciclos del mercado.

Dada las prácticas de la minería que son insostenibles a largo plazo, es necesario apoyar otros sectores productivos como un respaldo ante el cierre de minas. Aquí juega un papel importante la Responsabilidad Social Corporativa articulada con un plan de desarrollo local en el cual las comunidades tendrían una participación activa junto con las autoridades locales. Al final, según una de las recomendaciones del seminario de expertos sobre los objetivos del desarrollo del milenio (2006), el reconocimiento de las instituciones indígenas en las estructuras de gobierno nacionales y descentralizadas es un requisito imprescindible para que los indígenas puedan contribuir a la economía, al proceso democrático y al desarrollo de sus países. 

Omaira Mindiola es la gerente de proyecto de “Gobernabilidad Indígena en las Américas” de FOCAL.

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Strategies on Aid for Development in Latin America: What do Canada and Spain share?

Monday, 31 March 2008

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