Progress on the Summit since our last newsletter has been slow; with six months to go, negotiators from each of the countries have finally got down to the difficult business of drafting action items for the Summit documents. The first meeting of Summit negotiators took place in early October in Quebec City. After some general discussion, officials began to work on the “Democracy” Basket of the Summit. The job could not be completed; more drafting on issues relating to strengthening democracy will take place at the end of November.

Interestingly, just as the Summit Action Items begin to be drafted, elections in major countries of the hemisphere have emerged as a key factor for the success of the Summit in Quebec City in April. Some elections have already taken place or were planned such as those in Mexico or in the USA. Other elections, such as those in Peru, were not anticipated as Canada began to chair the Summit negotiations; now the question is whether these elections can meet the minimum standards for credibility being established in the current talks between the OAS, the opposition and the government in Peru. In this scenario, current President Fujimori would attend the Canadian Summit as the out-going leader and could seek to wear the mantle of the defender of democracy in Peru. Since the last Summit in Santiago in April 1998, there will be at least 14 new leaders of the countries of the hemisphere at the Quebec City Summit.

And now, Canada will hold a quick election by the end of November 2000. Canada’s parliamentary system does not specify a fixed term for the government, but allows it to seek a new majority and a new mandate from the electorate at any time of it’s choosing. The Canadian government is calculating that it will be returned to office with a majority, and can then focus more clearly on major public policy issues. As with the US elections, foreign policy and specifically, the Summit of the Americas, is not an election issue at home. Further, Canada’s new Foreign Minister, John Manley, will need time to settle into his new role and assess whether he will take up the human security agenda of his predecessor or seek some new imprint for Canada’s policy for the Americas.

What does all this mean for the Summit meeting in April? Several key countries will not focus their priorities for this event until well into December or January, leaving very little time to adjust the Summit Action Items prior to April. New administrations in Mexico, USA and Canada – the NAFTA partners – could inject fresh energy into the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and Summit negotiations. For the Mexican and US Presidents, the Summit will be their first multilateral “appearance” and one can expect some indication of leadership from them. The NAFTA leaders will need to demonstrate at the Summit that the domestic policy platforms they were elected upon can be elevated to the global stage. In the short term therefore, negotiators at the Summit drafting meetings will not be in a position to do much more than draft generic language that could be supported by whichever government comes to power.

More importantly, these elections illustrate the continued importance of democracy in the Summit process. Whether through formalizing a “democracy clause” in the Summit and the FTAA, or by strengthening OAS mechanisms which deal with ruptures in democracy, or by seeking a renewed
Are There Lessons to be Learnt from Other Summits?

Summitry is clearly becoming the preferred way for political leaders to confront issues requiring inter-state collaboration. With such influential meetings now occurring regularly at regional, sub-regional, and even international levels, one Summit should be able to draw lessons from another. The Meeting of Heads of State of South America (“The Brasilia Summit”) held on August 31-September 1, 2000, and the United Nations (UN) Millennium Summit held on September 6-8, 2000, appear to have opened the door for Canada as host of the Third Summit of the Americas to directly confront two burning priorities in the hemisphere: strengthening democracy through the addition of a democracy clause to the Summit of the Americas process, and the recognition that there can be no substitute for continued government focus in Summits on basic human needs and overall inequality in the region.

The Brasilia Summit was convened by Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso to discuss integrating the South American economies through trade and infrastructure projects, improving education and technology, and strengthening democratic institutions. The latter initiative has peaked the interest of many Summit onlookers in the hemisphere in that it resulted in a shared commitment to democracy resembling a democracy clause. The "clause" establishes that respect for democracy and the rule of law is a precondition for participation in future South American Summits, and that a mechanism of political consultations will be activated in case of a threat to democracy in any of the region’s countries.

The UN Millennium Summit gathered 152 of the 189 UN member states to discuss such issues as social and economic development, peace and security, the environment, and institutional reform of the UN bodies. Member states recognized that extreme poverty in the world and gross disparities in wealth (both between and within countries), combine to exacerbate other problems (including conflict, and environmental degradation).

Summit initiatives include:
- reducing extreme poverty by one half in every part of the world by 2015;
- ensuring that all children complete primary education by 2005;
- granting trade preferences to the world’s poorest countries;
- improving the lives of urban slum dwellers by 2020; and
- maximizing people’s access to new information networks, offering developing countries a chance to “leapfrog” earlier stages of development.

Interestingly, neither of these recent Summits made the connection between weak democracies and persistent inequality, nor did the Summits result in concrete solutions to these problems. The final declaration of the Heads of State of South America known as the Comunicado de Brasilia is not explicit about how the proposed democracy clause and punitive measure would function, and the final report of the UN Millennium Summit entitled We the People: the Role of the UN in the 21st Century does not state how such ambitious goals can be reached. This leads us to wonder if the ball is now in Canada’s court to define precisely what quality of democracy and what quality of social and economic development are desired in the hemisphere, and what are the necessary tools to reach these ideals.

Stacey Wilson-Forsberg
Policy Analyst, FOCAL

Will Elections Affect the Summit?
continued from page 1

commitment to a minimum standard of representative democracy, events in the Americas, and renewed priorities of accountability which emerge from elections in the northern countries, will result in the fact that the Canadian Summit will be the Democracy Summit. This is not just wishful thinking. With democracy under pressure in so many countries of the region, the shared notion of representative democracy in the Summit process needs to be defined, standards need to be set, and mechanisms for its defense and promotion need to be strengthened. Even countries that will not be holding national elections, such as Colombia, have cause to seek support for any and all measures that strengthen democracy, dialogue, and multilateral solidarity at the Summit. The failure of the South America Summit to mobilize political support for Colombia’s peace process leaves the door open for the Canadian host to foster such cooperation.

Civil societies of the countries of the region, private enterprises, the media, and legislators throughout the hemisphere are demanding that leaders use the Summit to get democracy “right”. Prosperity and quality of life issues remain priorities, but there is an emerging recognition that more work needs to be done on the fundamentals. The on-going debate between “sovereignty or intervention” and the backlash against public participation in policy issues in the Americas is another reason why a clearly articulated definition and commitment to the defense of democracy is needed from the Canadian Summit.

Nobina Robinson
Executive Director, FOCAL
The Environment: Recapturing Lost Momentum

In 1996, what was widely regarded as a successful Summit on Sustainable Development and the Environment took place in Santa Cruz, Bolivia within the Summit of the Americas process. At the Santiago Summit two years later, however, the momentum of Santa Cruz was clearly dwindling as Heads of State merely reiterated their support for the Bolivia Plan of Action without advancing measures to deepen commitments. In many member states, a lack of financial resources and/or political will hinder the implementation of Bolivia mandates, while an accepted formula for measuring progress has yet to be developed. As a result, the commitments of 1996 have yet to be translated into a coherent regional strategy to promote environmental sustainability in the Americas.

In order to make the 65 initiatives of Bolivia’s ambitious plan of action more manageable, the Secretary General of the OAS proposed a prioritization of inter-related issues such as water, health, energy, cities, biodiversity, and agriculture in a 1998 Report on Bolivia Summit Implementation. Nevertheless, measuring progress is still a problem. Financial resources need to be allocated to those organizations and bodies responsible for the implementation of environmental initiatives, while specific targets and clear indicators to measure implementation effectively are also necessary.

As host of the Third Summit of the Americas, Canada has an opportunity to put the environment back on the Summit agenda and to improve the environmental credibility of the Summit of the Americas process in general. Canada also has the technical know-how to support and assist other countries of the hemisphere with environmental initiatives. The environment should be seen as a theme that cuts across each of the three Summit baskets. The environment could even be a fertile ground for corporate social responsibility, one of many concepts that Canada would like to share with its neighbors.

Looking ahead, Canada has proposed to host a meeting of Ministers of the Environment of the Hemisphere in March 2001 prior to the Summit. This meeting should seek to foster dialogue between Ministers on the need for strengthening the role of Environment Ministries in their own countries, mobilizing resources, know-how, and capacity for sound environmental management, and recapturing the momentum and hope of the Bolivia Summit.

José Zaragoza
Junior Policy Analyst, FOCAL

Summit-related websites: Social Issues

http://www.oas.org/
Organization of American States (OAS)
Central organization in working toward many of the goals that are shared by the countries of North, Central and South America and the Caribbean, especially through the Summit of the Americas process.

http://www.iadb.org/
Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
The mandate of the IDB is to help accelerate economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean. An important contributor to the Summit process.

http://www.paho.org/
Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO)
The international public health organization serves as the specialized organization for health in the Inter-American System, and as the Regional Office for the Americas of the World Health Organization.

http://environment.harvard.edu/cumbre/
Summit of the Americas on Sustainable Development. Good source of information and original documents on the Bolivia Summit of 1996. Since 1997, this website has not been updated.

http://www.hrw.org/hrw/spanish/
Human Rights Watch, Portada Américas section. This site offers a broad view on the status of human rights in Latin America. Most articles are in Spanish.

http://www.americascanada.org/
2001 Summit of the Americas Official web page. Well designed with basic information.

http://w3.acdi-cida.gc.ca/index.htm
Canadian International Development Agency (ACDI).

http://www.usaid.gov/regions/lac/
United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Latin America and Caribbean Region.

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The Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas (FIPA) (formally the Parliamentary Network of the Americas) will be formally constituted at an inaugural meeting in Ottawa, Canada on March 7-8, 2001. Made up of members of national parliaments of the hemisphere, FIPA will bring the legislatures of the region into closer contact with hemispheric issues. Given that citizens often have greater access to members of parliament or congressional representatives than their head of government, it is hoped that the promotion of dialogue among parliamentarians of the region will make the OAS and the Summit of the Americas process more responsive to citizens’ concerns.

Parliamentarians have a key role to play in fostering democratic institution building, enforcing the rule of law, and ensuring greater public participation in the hemisphere. They are also relied upon to help carry out Summit initiatives. Most Latin American constitutions provide for political systems that, in principle, call for the separation of powers. Yet, in too many countries of the region power is concentrated in the executive branch of the state, creating highly centralized, top-down political systems with weak legislatures that allow heads of state to operate with relatively few restraints on their authority. In the long-term the FIPA initiative should help to strengthen independent legislatures that function to moderate and control executive power rather than serving as a rubber stamp for it.

FIPA will meet once a year rotating its meetings among the countries of the hemisphere. The Ottawa meeting will concentrate on process along with the proposed Summit of the Americas agenda. Specific topics for discussion will revolve around the three Summit baskets, and may include: the evolving role of parliaments, management of the consequences of economic integration in the Americas, drugs, crime, corruption and good governance, poverty reduction, and debt relief for heavily indebted countries. Though initiated by OAS Resolution 1722 “Parliamentary Network of the Americas” (June 5, 2000), the nature of FIPA’s relationship with the OAS and possible administrative support from the OAS Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (UPD) will be decided at the Ottawa meeting.

Stacey Wilson-Forsberg
Policy Analyst, FOCAL

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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
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<tr>
<td>October 1-3, 2000</td>
<td>19th Meeting of the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG)</td>
<td>Quebec City, Canada</td>
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<td>October 2-20, 2000</td>
<td>108th Regular Session of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights</td>
<td>Washington, D.C., USA</td>
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<td>October 4-6, 2000</td>
<td>10th Conference of Spouses of Heads of State and Government of the Americas</td>
<td>Lima, Peru</td>
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<td>October 5-6, 2000</td>
<td>Meeting of Mining Ministers of the Hemisphere</td>
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<td>October 9-13, 2000</td>
<td>5th Meeting of the Ministers for Children and Social Policy</td>
<td>Kingston, Jamaica</td>
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<td>October 17-20, 2000</td>
<td>4th Defense Ministerial of the Americas</td>
<td>Brasilia, Brazil</td>
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<td>November 7, 2000</td>
<td>OAS Special Committee for Inter-American Summits Management Meeting (CEGCI)</td>
<td>Washington, D.C., USA</td>
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<td>November 13 – 24, 2000</td>
<td>Meeting of the Governmental Expert Group regarding the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM) of CICAD</td>
<td>Washington, D.C., USA</td>
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<td>November 15-17, 2000</td>
<td>30th Assembly of the Inter-American Commission of Women Delegates</td>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
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<td>November 16, 2000</td>
<td>Inter-Agency Task Force Meeting on Bolivian Summit Follow-up</td>
<td>Washington, D.C., USA</td>
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<td>November 28-30, 2000</td>
<td>20th Meeting of the SIRG</td>
<td>Washington, D.C., USA</td>
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<td>December, 5-8 2000</td>
<td>24th Annual Miami Conference on the Caribbean and Latin America</td>
<td>Miami, USA</td>
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<td>December 11-15, 2000</td>
<td>Special Session of CICAD for the MEM reports</td>
<td>Washington, D.C., USA</td>
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<td>Juanary 18-20, 2000</td>
<td>Participa, Final Hemispheric Conference to present results of civil society national consultations</td>
<td>Miami, USA</td>
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<td>January 24-25, 2001</td>
<td>FTAA Trade Negotiations Committee Meeting</td>
<td>Lima, Peru</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 7-8, 2001</td>
<td>Inaugural Meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas</td>
<td>Ottawa, Canada</td>
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