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**Contact: Rachel Schmidt
Communications Director**

Tel: 613-562-0005 x242

Cell: 613-240-7584

Email: rschmidt@focal.ca

www.focal.ca

FOCAL APPLAUDS NEW CRTC REGULATIONS ON MEDIA OWNERSHIP

The Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL) applauds the new CRTC regulations which restrict cross-media ownership in order to ensure diversity in editorial programming. FOCAL has done extensive research on media transparency and access to information, finding that similar regulations are greatly needed in Latin America and the Caribbean, where the media is predominantly funded by the private sector and exhibits a lack of diverse programming options. FOCAL hopes that the CRTC example will serve as an entry point to new dialogue on media ownership and editorial diversity in Canada and throughout the Western Hemisphere.

To further encourage transparency around the role and connection of media and democracy, FOCAL's "Mapping the Media in the Americas" project has mapped the location, coverage and ownership structure of the media (TV, Radio, Cable and print) in 12 countries in the Western Hemisphere, including Canada. The project then crosses this data with electoral results and socio-demographic information. The result of this has been the creation of 12 dynamic maps that visually illustrate the connections between media, elections and demographics (www.mediamap.info). We encourage media professionals to make use of these maps and also to contribute their own information in order to continually improve and update the data. An official launch of the project, including a press conference and roundtable, will take place in March 2008. FOCAL will also be releasing a special edition of *FOCALPoint* in February that will focus on media and democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean.

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FOCAL is an independent, non-partisan think tank that fosters informed analysis and debate on social, political and economic issues in the Americas.

For more information, or to schedule an interview with a FOCAL analyst, please contact Rachel Schmidt, Communications Director, at 613-562-0005 x242 or rschmidt@focal.ca.