

Canada World View

ISSUE 28 • WINTER 2006

New World, Our World

Canada in the Americas



- Canada's leadership role in Haiti
- South America's economic powerhouses



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Canada World View provides an overview of Canada's perspective on foreign policy issues and highlights the Government of Canada's international initiatives and contributions. *Canada World View* is published quarterly in English and French by Foreign Affairs Canada.

Opinions expressed by named contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.

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Our cover

Two-year-old Christian Marroquin poses in 2001 with Canadian and Peruvian flags in the courtyard of his home in Pajonal Bajo, a community in southern Peru destroyed in a 1996 earthquake. World University Service of Canada, with the assistance of the Canadian International Development Agency, supported post-earthquake reconstruction efforts there.

photo: Greg Kinch/CIDA-ACDI

This page

A musician plays a long flute during the carnival in Oruro, Bolivia, a mining town in the country's altiplano region.

photo: CP (Marco Simoni)

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A BETTER WORLD

Michaëlle Jean became the new Governor General of Canada on September 27, 2005. Madame Jean had a varied and accomplished career as a teacher of languages, a Quebec broadcaster and a social commentator, while devoting herself to the cause of people in need, including disadvantaged women and children at risk. Born in Haiti and having fled the country as a young child in 1968, when she and her family sought refuge in Canada, Madame Jean brings to the position of Governor General a unique perspective as she represents Canadians as well as Canada to the rest of the world. The following are excerpts from her installation speech.

Here today, I am turning a significant page in my own story as I set off on this new adventure with hope and determination.

Hope has been a beacon for me since childhood and into my adult years. It is embodied in this country with its unlimited possibilities—this country that we sometimes take for granted. My own story begins as a young child in another country, one “draped in barbed wire from head to toe,” in the powerful words of the Haitian poet in exile, René Depestre, who is also my uncle. The story of that little girl, who watched her parents, her family, and her friends grappling with the horrors of a ruthless dictatorship, who became the woman standing before you today, is a lesson in learning to be free.

I know how precious that freedom is; I know what a legacy it is for every child, for every citizen of this country.

I, whose ancestors were slaves, who was born into a civilization long reduced to whispers and cries of pain, know something about its price, and I know too what a treasure it is for us all.

Every Canadian woman, every Canadian man prizes that freedom and would defy anyone who tried to take it away—of that I have no doubt. From Signal Hill to Vancouver Island, from Baffin Land to Thetford Mines, the freedom that is ours unites us all. Freedom has marked our history and our territory; it has marked our summer breezes and our howling winter winds. It has helped create the spirit of adventure that I love above all in this country, this country where each and every one of us is able to participate fully in the ongoing task of building it.

More than four centuries ago that spirit of adventure drove women and men to cross the ocean and discover a

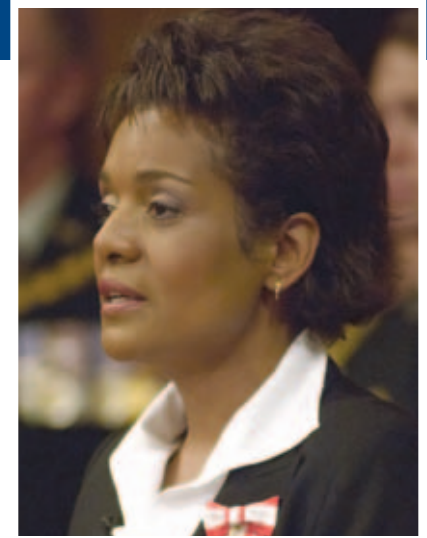


photo: Sgt. Eric Jolin, Rideau Hall

Michaëlle Jean, 27th Governor General of Canada, delivers her installation speech in the Senate Chamber in Ottawa on September 27, 2005.

Madame Jean, her husband, His Excellency Jean-Daniel Lafond and their daughter, Marie-Eden, in the Senate Chamber.



photo: Sgt. Eric Jolin, Rideau Hall

new world elsewhere. That spirit also led the First Nations to pass on to those new settlers the essence of this generous land. And it encourages people from all over the world to share in our prospects or to take refuge here and make a fresh start, safe from tyranny and violence. It inspires our artists, our scientists, our peacekeepers and our institutions as they work to spread our know-how and our message of hope. Today, we are the sum of those adventures.

We are encouraged to believe that everything is possible in this country, and my own adventure represents, for me and for others, a spark of hope that I want kept alive for the greatest number.

I know that our planet is fragile, and that natural disasters, like the one that recently assailed our American neighbours, are a brutal reminder of that fragility. And we have seen so many lose their possessions. And as is universally the case in such circumstances, we have seen emerge entire segments of a population, among the most destitute, men and women who had nowhere to go. Dispossessed, with no points of reference, facing sheer devastation, even utter dismay. Such images we have seen before—from Darfur, from Haiti, from Niger. And this time they came from New Orleans, from the margins of an affluent society.

Other changes have come, changes that sometimes leave us perplexed. Redefining national boundaries and the violent upheavals that sometimes accompany it, the opening of markets, the speed and convergence of our systems of communication, mean that the map of the world is changing day by day, before our eyes, and that some countries may be wondering about where they



Madame Jean and U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice meet at Rideau Hall on October 25, 2005.

fit in. The stakes are high: they include taking part in increasing globalization while at the same time protecting features that enrich humanity with our own perceptions of the world.

As a journalist, the profession I practised with passion and resolve, I have been a privileged witness both of a good many upheavals and of an unprecedented opening onto the world. I pledge that I will go on listening and that my curiosity will remain keen. We are at a turning point in the history of civilization and more than ever before, our future rests on those who are forcing us to imagine the world of tomorrow. Those women and men are today showing us the vast range of what is possible for us. They are etching upon our memories the breadth of our aspirations. They are holding out a mirror that reveals the gap between what we are and what we aspire to be.

There is an observation by Montesquieu, a philosopher of the Enlightenment, that has a particular resonance for me. It states: “The duty of the citizen becomes a crime if it makes him forget the duty of the man.” To this, I would of course add “the duty of the woman,” because we want recognition as full-fledged citizens in our own right. That statement inspires me and comforts me; for me it is a rampart against the barbarism that afflicts so many in this world. And it reminds me how fortunate we are to be citizens of a country that’s not afraid to tear down walls of prejudice, one whose generosity is its finest attribute in the concert of nations.

I hope with all my heart that, together, we can call upon the vigour of our shared history to realize our dearest and most ambitious wish: to make a better world. 🍁

**Read the full text of Governor General
Michaëlle Jean’s installation speech at
www.gg.ca.**



New adventure: Madame Jean and Jean-Daniel Lafond leave Parliament Hill by landau.

EYES ON THE AMERICAS

Canada's symbolic, political, business, personal and cultural connections within Latin America and the Caribbean are growing.

A local troupe performing Latin dances had a surprise for Canadian visitors to Cajamarca, Peru, one evening last May. When the show ended, the dancers came to the edge of the stage to unfurl what appeared to be a Canadian flag—but wasn't. In the middle of Peru's vertical-striped, red-and-white flag, where the country's coat of arms should have been, had been painted a Canadian maple leaf, making it a perfect amalgam of the two flags.

It was a gesture not lost on Denise Brown, who led the visiting group of students and faculty from the University of Calgary in her role as director of Latin American Studies there. "It was truly a bonding experience," says Brown, whose field-school students make annual trips to Latin America.

Many such experiences flow from Canada's growing connections with the dynamic cultures of the Americas region, which has more than 500 million people, comprises Central and South America and the Caribbean, and offers new vistas of opportunity for constructive partnership.

Long a champion of human rights, democratic process and poverty alleviation in this politically complex region, Canada today helps drive the effort to restore stability to Haiti, fosters a growing partnership with the regional powerhouse of Brazil and promotes the strengthening of governance throughout the Americas.

"This is our neighbourhood," says Peter Boehm, an assistant deputy minister at Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC) and former Canadian ambassador to the Organization of American States (OAS). For Boehm, who was the Prime Minister's personal representative to the Fourth Summit of the Americas held last November in Mar del Plata, Argentina, "it is in our interest to have a strong and



photo: CP (Fred Chartrand)



democratic hemisphere and we are doing our part in a committed and focused way."

Ties that bind

Canadians have a number of historical, political, symbolic, business, cultural, faith-based and personal links with the region.

Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson's initiative to expand Canadian aid around the world supported a great deal of Canadian-led development work in Latin America. Canada became a permanent observer to the OAS in 1972 and a full member of the organization in 1990. At that time, the end of a number of dictatorships and the stabilization of economies in the region were allowing for new relationships with the affluent North America, which had previously been oriented more toward European and Asian alliances. In 2001, the Third Summit of the Americas was held in Quebec City.

Commerce with the region has expanded significantly. In 2004, Canada had \$7.2 billion in exports to Latin America and the Caribbean, a 26 percent increase from the previous year, while more than 19 percent of the country's direct foreign investment, some \$85-billion, was in the region.

"Canadian governments should always be closely watching events in our own hemisphere, for all sorts of reasons, including self-interest," remarks Oakland Ross, a Latin American correspondent for *The Globe and Mail* in the 1980s.

Neal De Florio, president of Monarca Property Corp. in Toronto, believes there is enormous untapped economic potential in Latin America. There are political and social

Leaders of the Fourth Summit of the Americas gather for a plenary session in Mar Del Plata, Argentina, on November 5, 2005.

disparities as well as polarities among the leadership of the region, concedes De Florio, whose firm brokers real estate development in Latin America, but no more so than in “other large, emerging markets.”

The region presents a tapestry of urgent as well as much more long-term needs.

Disasters such as the devastation wreaked by hurricanes Stan and Wilma last fall in Central America and Mexico have been met by Canadian assistance. Private sector and non-governmental organizations from Canada collaborated in efforts in the wake of the destruction, including an airdrop to Guatemala of donated baby supplies and tents for temporary shelter, while the federal government provided immediate aid funding.

Decades of development work led by Canadian church groups, human rights organizations and NGOs, many in cooperation with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), in countries such as Bolivia, Honduras and Haiti have created a positive reputation for Canada, based not only on appreciation of its building of local schools, health clinics and water treatment plants, but on deeply held social values.

“Canada is often seen as an interesting—and inspiring—case in regard to issues such as Indigenous and minority rights, bilingualism and multiculturalism, status of women and social policy,” comments Victor Armony, an Argentinean immigrant who is a professor of sociology at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) and editor of the *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*.

Help for Haiti

Political upheavals in the region have drawn Canadian assistance at key junctures. Canada’s whole-of-government effort in Haiti, for example, has put Canada at the forefront in offering security assistance, development aid and diplomatic support there, most recently playing a critical role in assisting with preparations for the national elections, with \$29.5 million in support as well as plans to send up to 300 election observers.

Haiti is the largest recipient of Canadian assistance in the hemisphere, particularly in the areas of health, education and agriculture.

A historical role in international peacekeeping has also seen Canada leading the security effort in Haiti, a country that has suffered years of debilitating upheaval. Canadian police forces, including the RCMP, as part of the United Nations mission in the country, are helping to train Haitian police and rebuild damaged police stations and prisons, while Canadian advisers work with the Haitian Ministry of Justice on judicial reform and the restoration of the rule of law.

Darren Schemmer, Director General of Policy and Planning in the Americas branch at CIDA, says the turbulent situation in Haiti has required a careful, consensus-building approach. Schemmer says that Canada has “played a leadership role in bringing donors together in a coordinated, cooperative framework,” in areas such as agroforestry and school programs.

Ties between Canada and Haiti were highlighted by the widely enthusiastic reception given in both countries to the appointment of Canada’s new Governor General, Haitian-born Michaëlle Jean, a descendant of slaves and daughter of exiles from the country.

Madame Jean became an immediate standard-bearer for Canadian values and her appointment served as evidence of Canada’s mature relationship with the region. “The Governor General’s appointment symbolizes some of our links, linguistic and otherwise,” observes John Foster, a principal researcher at The North-South Institute in Ottawa.

Democracy on the move

The example of Haiti underlines that truly alleviating poverty requires democratic stability. In a region still marked by great inequities, Canada focuses much effort on governance.

While free elections are now more or less a regional norm, Canada continues to encourage respect for the rule of law, greater transparency and the inclusion of Indigenous people and women in the political process. “It’s a natural role for us,” notes Boehm.



photo: CF (Jose Luis Magana)

Hurricane Stan devastation: People are pulled over rails to cross the destroyed international bridge on the Mexico-Guatemala border at Ciudad Hidalgo, Mexico. Canadian assistance helped communities affected by raging flood waters and mudslides in the wake of the storm in October 2005.



Offering support: Captain Shawn Courty, with the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Canadian Regiment, helps a young boy shoot the first basket on a net that soldiers installed at a local orphanage in the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince in June 2004. The regiment was part of Canada's contribution to the UN Stabilization Mission in the country.

Canada feels that these issues are especially important to the region because democracy is the base for economic growth. That link was made explicit by the theme of the recent Summit of the Americas—Creating Jobs to Fight Poverty and Strengthen Democratic Governance.

Trading places

Canada's role as a forger of consensus in the region is gaining prominence, especially given the impasse at the Summit on the issue of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). Canada has made an unequivocal commitment to the success of the FTAA, with the premise that freer and fairer trade would lift people out of poverty and enable Canada to leverage its size to compete globally, generating jobs at home. With its differences resolved, the hemisphere could represent the largest economic alliance in the world.

At the Summit, however, while 29 nations agreed to renew the FTAA negotiations, four felt that the conditions for free trade were not propitious at this time and one rejected the FTAA altogether. Venezuela has argued for a counter-strategy to focus the cooperation effort within South America.

"Latin America requires approaches that focus on human development, domestic markets and domestic capacities," explains Ricardo Grinspun, a Chilean-born

professor of economics at the Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean at York University in Toronto. "International finance and markets play a role in that, but are not an end in themselves."

Influential *Miami Herald* columnist Andres Oppenheimer, however, strongly endorses the FTAA premise. "China, India and eastern European countries are carrying out what may be the biggest reduction in poverty in world history," he says, "and it is mostly due to their commercial opening to the world."

Brazil: An emerging priority

While multilateral cooperation in the hemisphere is critical, Canada's relations with individual countries of the region are also vital. A key tie is with Brazil, an emerging giant comprising half of South America's population and GDP, identified in Canada's recent International Policy Statement as a priority nation.

"Brazil is a major, sophisticated and influential player on the multilateral scene, whether it is in world trade negotiations as leader of the G20 or in UN peacekeeping operations," notes Florencia Jubany, a senior policy analyst at the Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL) in Ottawa. "Brazil is also a central actor in the Americas, and shares many points of convergence with Canada's own foreign policy."

Jamal Khokhar, Director General of the Latin America and Caribbean Bureau at FAC, says that Canada and Brazil "not only share a hemisphere, they share goals, priorities and—perhaps most important of all—values." This makes the two countries natural partners, he says. "We are living in a world of rising powers and Brazil is one of those powers. Canada appreciates Brazil's leadership and believes it can make a difference in the hemisphere."

Brazil is a force behind South American integration and has played a moderating role, which is critical given the economic hardships in neighbouring Andean nations such as Bolivia and Ecuador and the potential for political unrest there.

The Latin quarter

Brazilians also appreciate the quality of education in Canadian schools. Canada is the largest international destination for Brazil's students, who are joined by ever-greater numbers of young people from countries like Colombia, Venezuela and Argentina.

"In my classes I'm seeing increasing numbers of students from the region," says Andy Hira, a Latin America specialist at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, British Columbia. "For the Latin American student, having a degree from Canada is definitely a leg up in the job market [back home]."



Hope floats: Fishermen on Lake Olomega near San Miguel in El Salvador were able to buy new boats such as this one called Fé y Esperanza (Faith and Hope) through Canadian assistance to their fishing cooperative.

According to the 2001 census, some 787,000 people from the region have made Canada their permanent home, from the waves of refugees fleeing political strife in Argentina and Chile in the 1970s and 1980s to the massive influx of immigrants from Caribbean countries such as Jamaica and the Dominican Republic who have settled in Canada's large urban areas.

Noteworthy for their cohesiveness and strong community organizations are Haitian immigrants to Montreal, comments Victor Armony of UQAM. Language and religious links with the dominant Catholic francophone culture have created strong connections between Haitians and Quebec society, he says, adding that other immigrants from the region are becoming more involved in other communities.

"You can already see more Latin Americans active in their local school boards, in municipal politics."

One thing that fascinates Andres Mendoza, the National Marketing Manager of EMI Music Canada in Toronto, is that Latin cultural expression takes on new flavours in Canada, as artists from different nations of the region come together here. "Latin music created in Canada has a distinct Canadian-Latin style because of the interaction between the cultures," explains Mendoza, who comes from Chile.

Artists from the Caribbean join the mix as well. Canadian saxophonist Jane Bunnett has forged a wide range of relationships with Cuban musicians, with whom she has created a dozen jazz recordings and toured extensively.

Doing it differently in Cuba

Canada and Cuba marked 60 years of formal diplomatic ties in 2005. Cuba commands respect in the developing world for its tenacity and independence. "Cuba sort of punches above its weight," says Cuban specialist John Kirk, a professor in the department of Spanish at Dalhousie University in Halifax.

Kirk supports the approach Canada has taken in retaining unbroken relations with Cuba, a contrast to the U.S. estrangement with the island nation. "Canadian NGOs and church organizations have done a strong job there," he says.

Today, Canada works hard on the relationship, he adds, strengthening the link that will grow in importance in a

Canada and the OAS

In the 15 years it has been a member of the Organization of American States (OAS), Canada has been successful in making its influence felt.

When the country moved from permanent observer status to full membership in the OAS in 1990, there were concerns that Canada's independence would be compromised by joining a body in which the United States was such a major player. Today, observers agree that despite the ups and downs of the organization, Canada has benefited by joining.

Yasmine Shamsie, an assistant professor in political science at Wilfrid Laurier University and a specialist in Latin American politics, was actively involved with the NGO community 15 years ago, and was against Canada taking out membership in the OAS. Now, however, she thinks it was a good thing.

"We've made a tremendous contribution," she says, though adding that Canada could do even more in the organization. "We have definitely increased our profile in the region, and we wouldn't have been able to do that without joining."

Canada's Ambassador to the OAS, Paul Durand, calls joining the organization "a very significant foreign policy decision" for Canada. "With it, we announced to the world that Canada is a nation of the Americas. We are recognized and appreciated in the OAS as a progressive, constructive

member, one that has made a major contribution to hemispheric affairs."

Mr. Durand says Canada has been successful in getting the OAS to respond to its priorities—"everything from the landmines campaign to human rights concerns, from democratic governance to the anti-corruption convention in the Americas"—which to a certain extent has transformed the body. OAS membership has also helped Canada's relationship with the U.S., he says, with the two countries realizing they don't have major hemispheric differences, except over relations with Cuba.

Edgar J. Dosman, a senior research fellow at York University's Centre for International Security Studies, says Canada joined the OAS at the right time. Latin America was democratizing and Canada—no longer as strategically important to Europe and the U.S. with the end of the Cold War—was searching for new horizons.

Canada is the second-largest contributor to the OAS, with an annual assessed contribution of some \$11 million, representing more than 12 percent of the organization's regular budget. Canada also provides significant voluntary contributions.

Canada is seen at the OAS as a balanced participant, a "reasonable player" not driven by the agenda of any country or region, Mr. Durand says, "though it's a daily challenge" not to be pulled in one direction or another.

post-Castro era, when Canadian trade with the island may expand, along with Canada's influence there in matters of democratic development.

A future together

Geo-strategic and trade interests have long combined with development aid, human-rights concerns and myriad people-to-people links in Canada's relations with its southern neighbours.

Today, the need for cooperation and understanding within the region is even more critical. And Canada is more committed than ever to the progress of democracy in the region, particularly in the face of enduring poverty and problems of inequity.

FOCAL Executive Director Eduardo del Buey, who has been associated with Latin America for more than 30 years, remembers a time when internationalists resisted getting involved in the region. "It was the kiss of death from a career point of view," he says. "Now, our best and our brightest are going there."

They should. Canada's geographic reality as a country of the Americas represents an important opportunity for its own economic prosperity and the broadening of its political partnerships. It also has a responsibility to model and share Canadian values and practices in the areas of democracy, human rights and good governance.

Armony says his Latin American academic counterparts hold Canada up as "an example of innovation, efficiency

photo: Pierre St-Jacques / CIDA-ACDI



and social harmony." It's possible to idealize the Canadian example too much, he adds, yet the country's opportunity to effect change in the region is real.

"Canada has terrific potential to become a force toward democracy and social equality throughout the hemisphere," he says. "Canada has strong credibility capital." 🍁

Learn more about Canada and the Americas at www.americascanada.gc.ca.

Canada-Brazil cooperation: Experts examine seedlings at an experimental farm supported by Canada in Ouro Preto, Brazil. The project encourages the planting of trees that are profitable for small farmers while preserving the forest environment.

There are a number of challenges down the road at the OAS in which Canada may play a role. Dosman says that the post-9/11 world is a more complex place for foreign policy—and for the organization.

There are especially massive pressures over the future of Haiti and growing concerns about social unrest in countries such as Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela. Mr. Durand talks of an "emerging polarization, where South America is giving indications it might want to go its own way."

There's also the potential for disagreement over Cuba, which will come to the forefront post-Castro. Mr. Durand says Cuba will be a "tremendously difficult" issue for the OAS. "It is the elephant in the room."

Read about Canada and the OAS at www.international.gc.ca/latinamerica/oas-en.asp.



photos: courtesy of the OAS

▲ The Hall of the Americas at the Organization of American States headquarters in Washington: Canada has been successful in getting the OAS to respond to its priorities.

◀ Canada's Ambassador to the OAS, Paul Durand: Joining the organization was "a very significant foreign policy decision" for Canada.

THE WORLDS WITHIN US

Caribbean and Latin American expatriates are helping to reshape Canada's literary landscape.

When writer Neil Bissoondath was first published in 1985, he felt there were expectations that he would write only about the Caribbean.

Bissoondath, who had emigrated to Canada from the island of Trinidad as a young student in 1973, says he “struggled against the label of a ‘Trinidadian writer’ because it was reductive from the very beginning.” Instead, he set the stories in his first book, *Digging Up the Mountains*, in Toronto, Spain and Japan as well as in the Caribbean and Latin America.

Like many writers from the region who have made Canada home, Bissoondath straddles the old and new worlds in his work, creating new ways for Canadians to see themselves. “Canada is such a welcoming place to different voices that you feel free to explore whatever your imagination gives you,” he says.

Since the 1960s, immigrant writers from the Caribbean and Latin America have left their mark on the Canadian cultural landscape. Austin Clarke, who left Barbados in 1955 to study in Canada, has won many literary accolades for his nine novels and five

Nalo Hopkinson's *Mojo: Conjure Stories*; Neil Bissoondath's *Doing the Heart Good*; Nalo Hopkinson's *Midnight Robber*; Austin Clarke's *The Polished Hoe*; Neil Bissoondath's *The Unyielding Clamour of the Night*; and Nalo Hopkinson's *Skinfolk*.

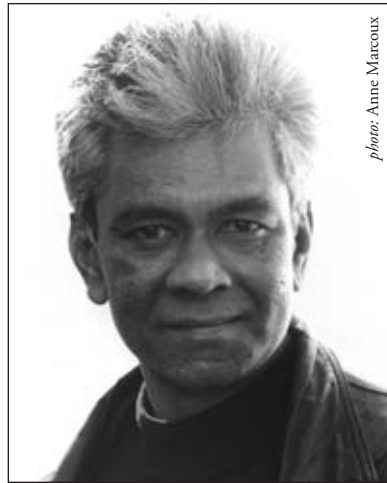


photo: Anne Marcoux

Different voices: Author Neil Bissoondath says that in Canada “you feel free to explore whatever your imagination gives you.”

short-story collections—including the 2002 Giller Prize for *The Polished Hoe*. Born in Trinidad, Dionne Brand has lived in Canada since 1970, and has become renowned as a poet, and, most recently, a novelist. Alberto Manguel, an internationally acclaimed anthologist, translator, essayist, novelist and editor originally from Argentina, became a Canadian citizen in 1982. And a decade after Dany Laferrière arrived in Montreal from his native Haiti in 1976, he published his widely praised first novel, *How to Make Love to a Negro*.

Writers from the region defy easy categorization. Some explore the experience of life as “new Canadians.” Others draw on their place of origin for inspiration. Still others tackle quintessentially Canadian themes. Bissoondath's novel *Doing the Heart Good*, for example, is the story of a 70-year-old anglophone Montrealer who is obliged to live with his daughter and her bilingual family.

Bissoondath's other works include *The Worlds Within Her* and, most recently, *The Unyielding Clamour of the Night*.

Nalo Hopkinson, who was born to Jamaican and Guyanese parents and lived in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Guyana before settling in Toronto in 1977, is best known for her science fiction and fantasy writing set in the Caribbean. However, she has also written erotica, a performance piece and a play, and is currently working on text for a comic book. In addition, she maintains close ties with dub poets, who write a “socially engaged” form of poetry set to music that evolved out of Jamaica.

“People sometimes assume I have one theme or palette, but I don't,” Hopkinson says. “Like any other artist, I go with what grabs me and follow that obsession until it's done. To all of it I bring an awareness of



photo: Thomas King

Author Austin Clarke left Barbados in 1955 to study in Canada.



photo: David Findlay

Caribbean perspective: Writer Nalo Hopkinson varies her writing but brings to it “an awareness of race, culture, gender and sexuality, and how all these things play out.”

race, culture, gender and sexuality, and how all these things play out, and I do this very much from a Caribbean perspective.”

In her PhD dissertation, Pamela Mordecai—a publisher, poet and writer originally from Jamaica who now lives in Toronto—used the term “prismatic vision” to describe how people from the Caribbean understand things.

“Caribbean societies—because of their history, location and cultural mix—are fluid rather than static,” says Mordecai, whose company Sandberry Press publishes Caribbean writers and writers of Caribbean heritage. “‘Prismatic vision’ means that Caribbean people can tolerate multiple—and sometimes contradictory—meanings, without feeling the need to reduce them to any single principle or point of view.”

Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC) has helped Sandberry to distribute books by Caribbean authors in the region and promotes Canadian writers from Latin America and the Caribbean

in literary tours around the world. By attending book launches and festivals abroad, some of the writers have made invaluable contacts within the international literary community. For example, at one sponsored event, Hopkinson was invited to edit an anthology called *Whispers from the Cotton Tree Root: Caribbean Fabulist Fiction*.

FAC also supports tours to Latin America and the Caribbean by Canadian artists such as writers, painters, actors, filmmakers, dancers and musicians. In March 2005, for example, two French Canadian musical groups toured the region to celebrate Canada’s participation in La Francophonie, with Swing performing in Colombia, Ecuador and Panama and Marie-Jo Thério impressing audiences in El Salvador, Guatemala and Haiti with her piano playing and powerful voice.

For writers and musical artists from the Caribbean who have moved to Canada, distance from their roots offers new perspective. “I tend to write about a place after I’ve left it,” says Bissoondath, who now teaches creative writing in French at l’Université Laval in Quebec City. “I need the distance to allow things to filter through my imagination.”

Hopkinson, who has returned to writers’ conferences in the Caribbean to discuss her work, also finds Canadian society more open. “I feel freer in Canada than I would in the Caribbean to write what comes to me. There’s a sense you can be both Canadian and whatever your background is,” she says. “That’s very, very precious to me—to have it all.” 🍁

photo: FAC



Singer Eve-Lange Delouis

Songs in the key of hope

When the Canadian embassy in Haiti co-organized a song contest last summer to inspire young people to vote in the national election, Eve-Lange Delouis had no doubt her song would win. Delouis, 26, started singing at eight years of age in the choir of the church where her father is a pastor, next to the family home on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince. “I prayed to God every day that I would place first,” she says.

When the finalists assembled to perform their songs in the Concert for Hope on October 30, the judges announced that Delouis, a nurse, had indeed won first place for her passionate “*Fòk n’al vote*” (“We’ve got to vote”). In addition to a prize of 50,000 gourdes (about \$1,400), Delouis will receive two years of promotional support from a local organization for her singing career in Haiti and abroad.

The contest, sponsored by the Canadian embassy in partnership with Haiti’s Ministry of Culture and Communications as well as Tamise, a Haitian cultural association, drew 60 submissions. Musical styles could vary, but the lyrics had to inspire young people to vote.

“The objective was to create a forum in which young Haitians could express the importance of citizen participation in the life of the country and the importance of the election process,” says Claude Boucher, Canada’s Ambassador to Haiti. “In addition to showcasing all of Haiti’s talent and cultural wealth, the contest bore witness to the strength and motivation within young Haitians.”

The quality of submissions was so high that the nine-member jury chose 15 finalists instead of 10. Their songs were compiled on a CD, which was played by local radio stations.

Albert Chancy, a radio station owner who headed the jury, says the contest was a creative way to get young people involved in the election. “We have a lot of youth in Haiti, and we don’t have elections often, and so many youth aren’t familiar with them.”

Eve-Lange Delouis is convinced that young people can play a critical role in the democratic process. “I’m very optimistic about the future of Haiti.”

Listen to and download the Songs of Hope at www.port-au-prince.gc.ca.

LATIN SENSIBILITY, CANADIAN CREDIBILITY

Roots in Latin America give Canadian diplomats José Herran-Lima and Guillermo Rishchynski a different perspective on the region.

A career in the far-flung world of the Canadian foreign service can sometimes lead back home.

Two new Canadian heads of mission in Latin America—José Herran-Lima, Canada’s Ambassador to Panama, and Guillermo Rishchynski, Canada’s Ambassador to Brazil—have deep roots in the region.

With their innate understanding of the history, politics, culture and language there, the two diplomats have hit the ground running in their assignments. And both are keen to draw on their Latin backgrounds to help forge stronger ties between Canada and its hemispheric neighbours.

Mr. Herran-Lima grew up in Bogota, Colombia, the son of a Brazilian mother and a Colombian father working in his country’s

foreign service. When he was 16, the family moved to New York City. The bits of news that Mr. Herran-Lima read about Canada in the newspapers there intrigued him and he decided to move to Toronto in 1974, becoming a citizen three years later.

Attending Osgoode Hall Law School in 1980, Mr. Herran-Lima became interested in the Canadian foreign service when he saw an ad in the school paper asking people to apply. “That year there wasn’t a lot of hiring and I was put on the waiting list. A year later, I was accepted.”

Mr. Herran-Lima asked not to be sent to Latin America, because “I wanted to see other parts of the world first.” Nonetheless, with his legal training and Spanish, his first assignment was a three-month stint in 1981 helping consular officers in Lima, Peru, deal with a large number of cases of Canadians charged with drug offences. At the embassy in Lima, he met a Canadian secretary, Susan Magee, who would, upon her return to Canada, become his wife. Mr. Herran-Lima has since been posted to Indonesia, Zimbabwe, Guatemala and Brazil.

In Panama, his first assignment as ambassador,



photo: FAC

Canadian Ambassador to Panama José Herran-Lima stands at the side of the Panama Canal with a transiting ship in the background. Canada is the seventh most frequent user of the Canal.

Mr. Herran-Lima is working to build on existing ties. “Canada’s historic links with Europe and the United States take up a lot of space,” he says. “There are many more linkages that can be made with Latin America.”

The key is person-to-person contact, Mr. Herran-Lima says. And that is on the rise. The number of Canadian tourists visiting Panama’s tropical resorts and of Panamanian students choosing to study in Canada is rapidly growing, and Canada is the seventh most frequent user of the Panama Canal. During the 1980s, when their country was under a dictatorship, many Panamanians left for Canada, but they have kept their ties after their return to Panama.

Guillermo Rishchynski, while Canadian-born, spent his early years in Panama, his mother’s homeland.



Presenting credentials: Ambassador José Herran-Lima presents his letters of appointment to His Excellency Martin Torrijos Espina, President of Panama, at the Palacio de las Garzas in Panama City.

photo: courtesy of the Office of the President of the Republic of Panama

His “life-on-the-move” began at six weeks of age when his mother and Canadian father, a Westinghouse sales representative, left Toronto for Panama City. After a decade there, the family spent several more years living throughout the United States. When Mr. Rishchynski visited Expo 67, “I fell in love with Canada and decided that’s where I wanted to return to live.”

After several years working for a trading company in Ottawa and travelling around the world, during which time he met his Honduran-born wife, Jeanette Portillo Tinoco, he joined Canada’s foreign service in 1982. His first postings were as a trade representative in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo in Brazil. Mr. Rishchynski has also had assignments in Amman, Melbourne, Jakarta, Chicago and as

Canada’s Ambassador to Colombia. Last September he came full circle back to Brazil.

Like his counterpart in Panama, Mr. Rishchynski believes Canada’s links with the region must be stronger. “Brazil and Canada need to know each other better. We’re both large, multi-ethnic, multicultural countries. We’re both federations—among the few in the hemisphere.” A number of trade irritants have arisen between the two countries in recent years, he says, but “we need to move beyond these issues, to work more closely in areas where our points of view converge, and to better manage our differences without losing sight of the totality of our relationship.”

Mr. Rishchynski and Mr. Herran-Lima see Canada as a key player at the Organization of American States

in promoting democracy, with a pivotal role in the hemisphere.

Canada’s model of social democracy is interesting to Latin Americans, says Mr. Herran-Lima. “More and more people are looking at Canada,” he says. “They see that we have been able to achieve economic growth and social equity and they find that very intriguing.” 🍁



Getting the message out: Ambassador Rishchynski is interviewed by Ginette Lamarche, the Radio-Canada correspondent for South America, at the Canadian Consulate General in Rio de Janeiro.



Canadian Ambassador to Brazil Guillermo Rishchynski and his wife Jeanette Portillo Tinoco, who is from Honduras, have been on eight postings abroad together.

Family ties

In addition to their Latin roots and their long and varied careers, José Herran-Lima and Guillermo Rishchynski share another similarity—both are married, with two children who have grown up in a succession of world capitals but now face the typical family conundrums and separations involved in life abroad.

“The foreign service has been very enriching for our kids,” says Mr. Rishchynski, whose son and daughter are now at university in Washington. “It has made them very adaptable, very tolerant of differences. And they have a solid understanding of the world.”

This is Mr. Rishchynski’s eighth posting with his wife Jeanette Portillo Tinoco, and the first without the children. However, he points out, the family’s two schnauzers are in Brazil, enjoying their fifth term overseas.

Mr. Herran-Lima’s younger daughter has just joined her older sister at the University of Ottawa this year, and he and his wife, Susan Magee, have made the difficult decision that Magee will stay behind in Ottawa both to provide support to the girls and to continue working as a management consular officer at Foreign Affairs Canada.

Magee has been with the department since 1976 and, while FAC has always been supportive of the pair as a working couple, the mission in Panama is too small to employ them both. “We decided we’ll try this for a year,” says Mr. Herran-Lima. “Then we’ll look at it again.”

LOST PARADISE

Canadian Jeffrey Kofman is the Miami correspondent for ABC News, covering the Caribbean and Latin America as well as Florida. Kofman comes from Toronto and worked as a correspondent for CBC News, moving to CBS News in New York and joining ABC in 2001. He has reported extensively from the region.

After travelling to more than 50 countries, I have found paradise. It is a guest house on a lush coffee plantation in South America called Finca Guayabal. Perched at the end of a long, curving driveway lined with hibiscus, the *finca*, or farm, is a tropical Eden. In every direction coffee trees line the steep mountain slopes. At sunrise, a thick mist hangs in the air. The deep valleys burst with topical trees, sporting blooms in oranges and pinks and reds. Birds of blue and yellow and green chirp and screech as they fly about.

All this for \$20 a night, meals included.

But before you rush to book your getaway from a frigid Canadian winter, consider that the *finca* is in one of the most dangerous regions in the world: the Andean highlands of Colombia, near the provincial city of Manizales, a short flight from Bogota.

“No,” says the elegant proprietor, Doña Maria Teresa Londoño, in polite but firm Spanish, “there are no guerrillas in this area. When we have guests I have a guard and dogs patrolling the grounds, but we have never had a problem.”

The same cannot be said of the surrounding region. I was in the area shooting a story on the collapse of world coffee prices. Just days after I left, guerrillas belonging to Colombia’s biggest rebel group stopped a convoy of cars a few miles north of the *finca*.

Ten men were kidnapped at gunpoint.

It is no accident that Doña Maria Teresa’s noisy, Spanish-speaking pet parrot is named Paz, or Peace. That is what has long eluded this country, once home to notorious narco-traffickers and now under siege from guerrillas who have taken control of the drug trade and terrorize the population of 44 million. In the last decade, rebels have kidnapped some 3,000 people a year.

The 65-hectare *finca* has been in the Londoño family since the 1940s. Despite her advanced years and delicate shoes, Doña Maria Teresa nimbly navigates the surrounding jungle slopes, showing visitors the impressive local flora. “Look there,” she points with pride to a flowering plant much taller than her five-foot frame, “a white bird of paradise. Very rare.” And beautiful. An albino cousin of the orange and violet hothouse flower found in so many Canadian florist shops.

Foreign tourists are equally exotic here. Doña Maria Teresa has occasionally seen Europeans and Canadians, but most guests are Colombians. Americans? As rare as that white bird of paradise.

A few days after returning to Bogota, I had dinner with an American diplomat and told him about my enthralling journey to the *finca*. He nodded knowingly. “Colombia could have a \$5-billion-



photo: courtesy of ABC News

Tropical Eden: ABC Latin America correspondent Jeffrey Kofman stands in a coffee grove on Finca Guayabal.

a-year tourism industry,” he said. “If it could ever rid itself of guerrillas and drugs, this country could be as popular as France.”

It seems a perfectly reasonable—if tragically unattainable—vision for so much of this region but especially this place of extraordinary natural and historical riches.

Colombia, under the firm and controversial leadership of President Alvaro Uribe—and with more than \$4 billion in aid from the United States—is struggling to regain its security and crush rebel groups. Kidnapping and murder rates have fallen significantly, but are still treacherously high. Drug production has been curtailed, but Colombia remains the single-biggest source of cocaine on U.S. streets.

At Finca Guayabal, visitors wake to the chirping of birds and the squawk of Paz. “*Quiero Cacao*,” he says. “I want chocolate.”

And who wouldn’t? The chocolate and coffee here come from the trees to the breakfast table. A visit to the *finca* makes clear that Colombia is a land of enormous possibilities. If only there could be peace.

Until then, Paz will continue to squawk for his chocolate in splendid, tarnished isolation. 🌿

MAKING THE CONNECTION

An organization supported by Canada helps bridge the digital divide across the hemisphere.

There's an image in Ben Petrazzini's mind, an image that takes form as he talks about what the Institute for Connectivity in the Americas (ICA) does.

A teacher, say, in Colombia, helps to develop an innovative software tool for teaching math to Grade 3 students. The software is made available on line in Colombia on the National Education Portal, and the following day it can be downloaded and used by schoolchildren from Baja California in northwestern Mexico to Tierra del Fuego on the southernmost tip of South America. Instantly, resource-poor schools have a new teaching tool.

Three years after becoming operational, the ICA is making this type of instant connectivity a reality. The institute supports the development of information and communication technology not only for schoolchildren, but also for villages that need Internet connections, public servants who want to share best practices and businesspeople looking to increase their knowledge and to develop skills.

"Most countries work in isolation," says Petrazzini, the ICA's acting manager. "We're seen as kind of an objective partner that facilitates integration across the region."

Operating on a five-year, \$20-million budget through 2007, the ICA finances some projects and acts as a facilitator in others. It has the flexibility to work with governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector,



photos: Y. Beaulieu, IDI

says Luis Barnola, a senior program specialist with the ICA in Ottawa. "We're a catalyst."

The ICA was created as part of Canada's contribution to the 2001 Summit of the Americas, held in Quebec City. It became apparent during the digital boom of the 1990s—when the Internet went from being a novelty to a necessity—that parts of Latin America and the Caribbean needed a boost.

Working through Canada's International Development and Research Centre, with 10 full-time employees based in Ottawa and Montevideo, Uruguay, the institute has supported 60 initiatives since 2002.

For example, it has worked to connect the national education portals of various Latin American countries. This connection is up and running and would allow the sharing of the Grade 3 math software that Petrazzini gives as an example.

"Those portals were working in isolation, so what the ICA has done is fund the creation of a regional network," says Petrazzini, who is based in Montevideo.

"The ministries of education of each country are members of the



▲ Tangled wires connect concrete houses in Olocuilta, El Salvador.

◀ Digital boom: In Belén de los Andaquíes, Colombia, a father and his son transport a computer monitor on horseback.

network, and when they produce educational content, that content is immediately circulated to the whole region," he says. "It's very powerful, because it multiplies educational content and it allows kids everywhere to have access to the same new pedagogical tools."

There are many other ICA projects. For example, @Campus, a pilot e-learning platform designed by the Mexican public service, has trained more than 800 Mexican public servants in an effort to improve efficiency and accountability as well as strengthen democratization. The project, which is being hailed as a model internationally, is ready to deploy to other countries, explains Barnola, who spearheaded the initiative.

Connectivity is not limited to teaching tools. The ICA is also working on such technology as wireless fidelity (WiFi) and connecting remote areas using low-cost, high-speed Internet.

Says Petrazzini: "A number of our projects are aimed at giving communities that are excluded the chance to enter the information age." 🌟

Learn more about the ICA at www.icamericas.net.

GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Canadian businesses tapping into South America's economic powerhouses are finding rich rewards.

On a recent trip to Brazil, Vancouver software executive Tom Teixeira experienced first-hand the emerging global giant's appetite for Canadian products.

At a São Paulo business reception for his company, ACL Services Ltd., the turnout of high-powered officials invited from among Brazil's top firms and government agencies was an astonishing 100 percent.

"The interest from major organizations in working with us is profound," says Teixeira, whose company first entered the Brazilian market nine years ago. "It's something we've never seen before."

top customer and Chile quickly rising up the charts—ACL is now bracing for a further surge in sales.

"We are sitting on the tip of the iceberg," says Teixeira. "The opportunities we have uncovered over the past nine years have been considerable, but what we see now is that they are growing exponentially."

On a continent once marred by political and economic instability, his experiences hold true for other Canadian companies and investors now chalking up successes. That especially is the case in Brazil and Chile, which, after returning to democracy in the late 1980s, removed many barriers to foreign trade and investment. Today the two countries account for 60 percent of Canadian foreign direct investment in the region, particularly with tax agreements that simplify the treatment of foreign nationals.

Brazil—the largest market in South America, with 178 million people—ranks 13th among world economies and first among Canada's trading partners in the region. In 2004, two-way trade between Canada and Brazil was \$3.2 billion, climbing 24.7 percent from 1995, with Brazil enjoying a growing surplus, according to Statistics Canada.

One Canadian newcomer to the Brazil market over the past decade is The Woodbridge Group, a company based in Mississauga, Ontario, that makes foam seating products for the automotive sector in 18 countries. In 1996, working with a local partner, Woodbridge became the first large Canadian auto supplier to set up a manufacturing facility in Brazil—

serving six car manufacturers from three plants. After buying out its partner in 1999, Woodbridge now supplies 21 vehicle-makers around the world from four plants in Brazil.

"The experience has been the best possible," says William Santos, operation manager for the company's Brazil plants, which consistently score high in international quality comparisons. "People here work hard and they are not satisfied with average results."

Like Brazil, Chile is a resource-rich country that is opening its doors to a diverse mix of entrepreneurs, beyond a historic focus on mining. Although the country is smaller, with a population of 16 million, the Economist Intelligence Unit recently ranked Chile 19th among the 60 best countries in which to conduct business over the next five years.

Since 1991, Vancouver's Methanex Corp. has made Chile a key base for its global production of methanol, a basic ingredient in industrial and household products. During that time, Methanex has invested \$1.3 billion in southern Chile, which is close to gas-rich petroleum fields and ocean transportation routes. Earlier this year, the company opened its fourth plant near Punta Arenas, raising production from all of its Chilean plants to four million tonnes of methanol a year—about 12 percent of the world market.

"Chile is an excellent country in which to do business," says Methanex president and CEO Bruce Aitken. "It is very welcoming of foreign investors and has developed a very open and successful economy."



Hot market: Traders yell orders on the floor of the Bovespa stock market in São Paulo, Brazil, Latin America's largest stock exchange.

ACL Services develops audit-specific software tools sold in 137 countries, in a field where governments and the private sector are racing to meet new global standards to protect against corruption and waste. After years of double-digit growth for the company in South America—with Brazil the

photos: courtesy of Methanex Corp.



Methanex Corp. president and CEO Bruce Aitken (third from left) tours the company's new plant in Punta Arenas, Chile, (in banner) with senior management and employees.

In the past decade, building from a small base, two-way trade between Canada and Chile has jumped 150 percent, reaching \$1.6 billion in 2004, spurred by a bilateral free trade pact signed in 1997. That agreement allows most industrial and farm products from Canada to enter Chile duty-free.

Those who do business in the region say that countries such as Brazil and Chile present a number of challenges, including the considerable distance from Canada, as well as language barriers and customs issues. However, Canada also shares much with these countries: similar business climates, good infrastructure, a trained workforce and sophisticated consumers.

While he is pleased with his company's success in Brazil and Chile, Teixeira advises others who want to do business there to do their homework.

"It is incumbent on whoever is entering the market to understand it," he says, "No opportunity for growth comes without risks." ❁

For more information about trade with Brazil, Chile and other countries in South America and the Caribbean, visit the Trade Commissioner Service at www.infoexport.gc.ca and search the region.

LEARNING FROM MAPLE BEAR

When it comes to discovering Canada, kids in Brazil are starting early.

Preschoolers in the country attending new Maple Bear schools will be introduced to Canada through lessons on the country's customs, culture, and bears, as well as songs, poems and books by Canadians. It's all part of a bilingual, child-centred curriculum for children three to six years of age developed by Canadian experts in early childhood education and delivered by local franchises in Brazil.

"We're going as young as we can" says Rodney Briggs, president of the Canadian Education Centre (CEC) Network, a private, non-profit company that promotes and markets Canada as a study destination for international students and has developed Maple Bear. "There's no mistaking that this program comes from Canada."

Seven Maple Bear schools are to open in Brazil in February, with a total of 52 of the preschools expected around the country within four years. There are four Maple Bear schools operating in India, with plans to start the program in South Korea, Turkey, Mexico and Russia.

"It's a positive way to get the message out about Canadian education," says Briggs, adding that there is a lot of demand for such preschool programs in rapidly developing countries with a burgeoning middle class. "Parents are looking for high-quality, western-style

education that will get their children off on the right foot."

Such programs are expected to influence more than just young learners, with the schools "branding" Canada and improving bilateral relations between countries. Maple Bear alumni could also choose Canada as a study destination as they grow up. CEC operates in 17 countries around the world, representing 300 Canadian institutions ranging from universities, community colleges and secondary schools to language schools and summer camps.

Canada is the number one study-abroad destination for Brazilians, with 10,000 students coming to Canada from Brazil last year, attracted by low costs, a streamlined visa process, the ability to study in English or French and few security issues, Briggs says. "They see Canada as a welcoming, safe country with good-quality education programs."

Fernanda Purchio, the manager of CEC Brazil in Sao Paulo, says the number of Brazilians choosing Canada to study is expected to grow. In Brazil, there are more than 55 million students in formal education programs, the fourth-largest student population in the world after China, India and the United States.

There is also an active Brazilian Association of Canadian Studies, with 18 Canadian Studies centres located in Brazilian universities, which serves to enhance academic links between institutions in Brazil and Canada. ❁



FINDING COMMON GROUND

Indigenous people across the hemisphere, with the support of Canada, are working together on issues from rights and self-determination to sustainable development and the control of lands and resources.

When Darrel McLeod, a Nehiyaw (Cree) from the Treaty 8 territory in Alberta, meets another Aboriginal person from anywhere in the Americas, it takes only a few minutes of conversation to find common ground.

They might compare notes on how they are keeping their languages and cultures alive, discuss social and health concerns that are widespread in Indigenous communities, or ask how the courts in their respective countries are dealing with land claims issues.

McLeod, the executive director of the International Relations Directorate at the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), says these shared concerns form the backdrop for the growing ties between Indigenous people in Canada and the rest of the Americas—links that Canada is playing a lead role in forging.

According to the Inter-American Development Bank, there are about 55 million Indigenous people throughout the Americas, some seven percent of the population. Social indicators for this group show higher rates of poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition and disease and lower levels of access to employment, financial resources, education and health services than among non-Indigenous people.

McLeod says Indigenous people in the Americas have been collaborating informally for perhaps 50 years, but their issues are increasingly part of the political dialogue at a higher level.

The First Indigenous Summit of the Americas, held in Ottawa in 2001 as a lead-up to the Third Summit of the Americas, was supported by the Canadian government and Aboriginal organizations. At the second such Indigenous summit held in Buenos Aires last fall, a few days before the Fourth Summit of the Americas, the AFN was one of the lead organizers.

A declaration adopted there rejects international agreements such as NAFTA and Mercosur, demands Indigenous peoples' participation in international forums and calls for the acknowledgement of the intrinsic value of the relationship of Indigenous people to their lands, resources, spiritual values and ancestral belief systems.

The declaration, presented to and adopted in part by the Summit of the

Americas a few days later, appeals for participation by Indigenous people in the political process. "Without our inclusion on an equal footing," it states, "democracy within the states will remain incomplete and unsatisfactory."

Keith Smith, a senior policy adviser on Aboriginal affairs at Foreign Affairs Canada, says the federal government supports Aboriginal initiatives in several ways—including through the Indigenous Peoples Partnership Program, financed by the Canadian International Development Agency. That program provides opportunities for Indigenous organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean to form partnerships with Canadian Aboriginal groups in order to contribute to the sustainable development of Indigenous people in their region.

Smith says that Canada "has a lot to offer in terms of best practices and lessons learned" on Aboriginal policy and is looking to learn from other countries as well.

Canada supports efforts by the Organization of American States to prepare an American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples that will advance the quality of life and human security of Indigenous people in the region.

Symbolic of Canada's commitment to Aboriginal issues in the Americas—and the ties between Indigenous people across the region—is an inukshuk created by Inuit master carver Bill Nasogaluak that forms the centrepiece of the new Canada Plaza in Guatemala City, the capital of Guatemala. In that country, Indigenous people form a majority of the population. ❁



An inukshuk grows in Guatemala: The centrepiece of the new Canada Plaza in Guatemala City is an inukshuk created by Inuit master carver Bill Nasogaluak out of Guatemalan stone, with a piece of Canadian granite from the Northwest Territories at its heart.

IN BRIEF

DART brings relief to Pakistan

Canada's Disaster Assistance Relief Team (DART) returned from its second mission of the past year, providing care and essential services following the devastating earthquake in the Kashmir region of northern Pakistan.

The DART mission known as Operation PLATEAU brought more than 200 medical personnel, engineers and soldiers to a remote mountain area near Muzaffarabad, the epicentre of the October 8, 2005, earthquake that killed more than 73,000 people and left some 3 million homeless.

Based at Garhi Dopatta in the Jhelum Valley, DART provided treatment to more than 11,700 patients—including some 7,000 people treated by mobile medical teams operating in isolated areas that could only be reached by a chartered helicopter or on foot—and distributed more than 3.8 million litres of pure water.

"It was a huge undertaking," said Captain Rick Regan, a DART operations officer, adding that the biggest challenges

in the region were the treacherous conditions of roads and other infrastructure following the earthquake and the steep, rough terrain that made it hard to reach severe casualties. "You couldn't just build a medical facility and expect people to climb down out of the mountains and find you."

DART members provided a number of additional services, delivering babies and inoculating people who might have been exposed to diphtheria, repairing the X-ray machine at the local health-care centre, providing technical advice on reconstruction efforts, building latrines in displaced-persons camps and bringing tents to remote locations. The team included three Pakistani Canadians who were able to speak Urdu and understand the culture.

Medical treatment and water purification capabilities were handed over to long-term relief organizations such as the Red Crescent Society, a branch of the Red Cross, and Regan said that people in the region are beginning to rebuild their homes, villages and lives.



Local girls carry clean drinking water produced by DART at the Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Unit site in Garhi Dopatta, Pakistan.



Pakistani and Canadian soldiers with DART prepare a young boy with broken legs for a helicopter medical evacuation from the remote mountain village of Palhot Bala, Pakistan.

Last January and February, following the Indian Ocean tsunami, a DART mission in Sri Lanka called Operation STRUCTURE treated more than 7,600 patients, produced nearly 3.5 million litres of drinking water and transported more than 70,000 people across a local waterway.

See more on DART in Pakistan at www.forces.gc.ca/site/Operations/Plateau/index_e.asp.

photos: Sgt. Frank Hudec, Canadian Forces Combat Camera

From the ground up

One year after a massive tsunami in the Indian Ocean devastated the coastlines of countries across the region, Canada's support for communities there is making a difference.

In the immediate aftermath of the tsunami triggered by an earthquake on December 26, 2004, an estimated 5 million people needed humanitarian assistance and 270,000 people died.

Concerned Canadians responded immediately and generously. Their donations included some \$213 million given to eligible non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to help tsunami-affected communities, which the Government of Canada is matching dollar-for-dollar as part of its five-year, \$425-million commitment following the disaster. The Canadian International Development Agency is channelling aid through international agencies such as the World Food Programme as well as

23 Canadian NGOs that work with local partners. In addition, many other government departments responded to the disaster according to their expertise.

Support from Canada has been instrumental in the three phases of assistance, starting with relief and rehabilitation and moving on to reconstruction activities that are well under way.

In the relief stage, Canadian NGOs and partner organizations provided food, medicine, basic supplies and emergency items such as insecticide-treated bed nets to help prevent malaria. Rehabilitation involved setting up temporary shelters and water supplies, addressing the emotional needs of survivors and restoring livelihoods through initiatives such as business training. Now, reconstruction measures are helping to rebuild infrastructure, erect permanent homes, restore local governments, and provide credit, training and other services to businesses—all the while engaging citizens in the process.



Master carpenter Muchsin keeps a watchful eye on an apprentice cutting wood in the village of Baroh Blang Me, Indonesia. After the tsunami destroyed Muchsin's first shop, a grant helped him buy equipment and restart his business.

Read about the one-year anniversary of the disaster and the relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction efforts of Canadian organizations in individual communities affected by the tsunami at www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/canadatsunami-e.

photo: Benoit Aquina / CIDA-ACDI



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Cuba chronicles

As a chronicler of cultural landscapes, Toronto photographer Elaine Ling found a rich subject in Cuba.

Born in Hong Kong and having moved to Canada at the age of nine, Ling is both a physician and a photographer, dividing her time between the two professions as a tireless traveller "drawn to the deserted, mythic reaches of the earth." She has worked as a doctor in places such as Nepal, Abu Dhabi and Canada's North, including the eastern and western Arctic, while photographing deserts, ruins and isolated nomadic families.

She says that in Cuba, "an island caught between the grandeur of old-world glory and the decay of the immediate epoch," she found "an urban landscape that reflects a struggle between daily life and the slow forces of nature." Responding to people's invitations to visit as she wandered the streets with her camera, Ling captured black-and-white images of household shrines, communist icons, artifacts of past splendour, sculptural nymphs and gardens frozen in time.

Ling has presented her images in four chapters: architecture, interiors, religion and gardens, and exhibited them throughout the world and around Latin America.

Ling found Cuba in metamorphosis; indeed, a "tangible new energy" has already reconstructed and restored some of the crumbling buildings she had photographed just months earlier.

See more of Elaine Ling's photography at www.elaineling.com.

Architecture: *Grand Staircase Mirror*



Interiors: *Grandmother's Chair*



Religion: *Saint Teresa Family Shrine*



Gardens: *Dance Garden*

