

Atlantic Regional Symposium:
Engaging Canadian society in keeping Canada safe

Fredericton, New Brunswick - February 5, 2006

Member report

Consistent with the Roundtable's mandate and objectives, I hosted an Atlantic regional symposium, "Engaging Canadian Society in Keeping Canada Safe," in collaboration with the New Brunswick Multicultural Council Inc (NBMC). The symposium was held on February 5, 2006 in Fredericton, New Brunswick.

Participants of the symposium included members of various ethno-cultural communities, youth, academics and federal officials from the Department of Public Safety, RCMP, CSIS, the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and Canadian Heritage.

The symposium included a panel discussion with officials from the RCMP, CSIS and the CBSA. Officials provided an overview of the role their respective agencies play in national security and answered questions from participants.

During facilitated group discussions, participants explored the role individuals and communities play in ensuring national security and discussed how this role could be enhanced through collaboration with the government.

Participants expressed a strong interest in learning more about the Canadian security system and the security agencies. There was general agreement that security is a shared responsibility of all Canadians.

Key issues raised included concerns about racial profiling (fed by media stereotypes), balancing security and human rights, privacy issues related to information sharing by security agencies, systemic barriers to employment and effective integration of immigrants in the Canadian society, need for increased cultural sensitivity training for security agency officials and more outreach to ethno-cultural communities. The need for building trust and bridges between the security agencies and various ethno-cultural communities was identified as crucial to a collaborative relationship aimed at enhancing the security of Canada.

Ashraf Ghanem

Member, Cross-Cultural Roundtable on Security