

**IDRC Futures:  
Toward A Corporate Strategy**

**Consultations with Staff**

**Ottawa, Canada  
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## Welcome

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### Maureen O’Neil, President, IDRC

Maureen O’Neil welcomed participants—IDRC staff from Ottawa and the regions, and invited guests and presenters—to this consultation on the future of IDRC. This workshop is but one step in determining the strategy that will take IDRC from 2005 until 2010. Ten different papers provided to participants examine knowledge networks, the research setting in the South, and foreign policy and development cooperation context in Canada. “We are not here to conduct a peer review of those papers,” said O’Neil. Rather, the objective is to use these papers and comments as the basis to discuss two questions:

- What trends in Canada and beyond have the greatest significance to the Centre?
- What are the implications of these trends for IDRC? How do they affect the kind of organization we want to become?

“By the end of tomorrow, we should have covered most of the issues relevant to our corporate strategy,” said O’Neil, adding that the draft form of the strategy would be shared with the Board by March 2004. In June the Board will receive a full draft of the Corporate Strategy and Program Framework and an accompanying Operational Plan. We will seek approval of the final version in October 2004. “I hope all staff will contribute to this important effort.”

O’Neil urged participants to leave their sectoral hats at home. “We are here to do big corporate thinking.... It’s ‘scheming and dreaming’ across the broad spectrum,” she said, concluding, “*Bienvenue à l’aventure.*”

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## Explaining the World Out There

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**Host: Ken Rockburn**

**Panellists: Bernard Wood and Janice Stein**

Ken Rockburn welcomed Bernard Wood, of Bernard Wood and Associates, and Janice Gross Stein, Director of the Munk Centre for International Studies and a Trudeau Fellow.

Rockburn began by reading two quotes from Bernard Wood’s background paper in which he said that development cooperation is “still underdeveloped—patchy in coverage and puny in scope” and that “the well-being of most of the world’s people has not yet translated into political imperatives.”

Wood said that he was still moderately optimistic. “The realities of the developing world have finally come crashing in,” he said, adding that it was clear 30 years ago that the path taken was unsustainable. Trade, and not just security, has brought this reality home.

Asked if she thinks issues post-9/11 have been brought forward or been driven to the background, Janice Stein replied that both are true. The events of 9/11 have made it transparently

clear that the developed world cannot ignore whole regions of the world. Stein said that to some extent, Canada and some EU nations understood this, which seemed to have come as a shock to the U.S. The gloomier side is the way the agenda is being understood, interpreted, and institutionalized largely as a U.S.-led security agenda and the need for better intelligence, policing, and security. Stein predicted that the Department of Homelands Security would have a long lifespan, outliving its original intent. A number of Southern countries have also signed on—some because they have been under pressure to do so, but others because it serves their purpose to close down the process of internal change. “This is a really deep struggle in the world,” said Stein, noting that not everyone shares her sense of pessimism.

Referring to remarks that Prime Minister Chrétien made on the anniversary of 9/11, Rockburn noted that they were not well received in the United States. Wood called those remarks “a funny little Canadian game going on,” and noted the difficulty of reaching a single conclusion in the U.S. given the range of views. The major aid programs of the Bush Administration—the Millennium challenge and the HIV/AIDS strategy—are not keyed to the war against terrorism, and were “no small thing” for a Republican government to have pushed through. “I agree that there is a huge tension in the agenda,” said Wood. “But I believe that at the end of the day the U.S. is too big and too important...and will be forced to steer a moderated course.”

Rockburn noted that President Bush was quoted as saying that those interested in receiving U.S. aid would have to “walk the tough walk.” Stein described the U.S. initiatives as “pick the winner” strategies that turn a blind eye to vast parts of the world that do not meet the standards set by the U.S. They also have enormous potential to skew the agenda. Wood argued that the U.S. would be unable to sustain that approach. Aid taps cannot be turned on and off according to one country’s criteria. Stein agreed, noting that many people who work on development agendas recognize how prejudicial this approach is. “We can’t spend the money in the short term,” she said. “The risk is in the general public’s understanding. People can walk away eight years from now and say that this was yet one more example of a failed strategy.”

Wood remarked, “This strategy is more than half right, and that’s important.” The near-death experience in development assistance in the 1990s was caused in part by unrealistic expectations. Donors now want developing countries to have a stake in aid development. Everyone involved recognizes that good policies and good governance have to be in place.

Rockburn directed the conversation to recent events in Cancun, which many interpreted as an NGO victory. Stein agreed that it was a very important meeting highlighting the issue of American and EU agricultural subsidies, and said that to have continued the negotiations in such an asymmetrical set of boundaries was not sustainable. Washington has heard the cry, but the real obstacle lies with the EU—with the French manufacturers of Camembert, for example. “I am optimistic that this next round [of negotiations] will take on this issue, which has been a serious drag on the process,” said Stein.

Wood agreed. Developing countries have—in a very powerful way—been able to make their point of view heard. The OECD was the first to quantify this problem, and Wood said that Canadians have to make the point within Canada. Stein said that Canadian farmers realize the farmers in the U.S. are being subsidized to an order of magnitude that makes farming

unsustainable in Canada.

Rockburn said that Lloyd Axworthy is advocating for more of a liaison between Canada and Mexico, and asked if this is reasonable. Wood remarked that ganging up on the United States is unnecessary—that he would always look for alliances in the U.S., and a North American focus. When Canada goes head-to-head, lobby-to-lobby with the U.S., it always loses. Stein said that when she speaks in the United States, there is a sense of relief that someone is giving voice to the concerns of so many Americans.

Asked about the role of NGOs, Stein pointed to the exponential rise of civil society organizations, their capacity to bring people together, and their desire to share knowledge and solve problems. A timely example is the Canadian government announcement about changes to the Generic Drug Act for anti-retroviral drugs. This push came from networks of NGOs set up with the public and private sectors, recognizing the need for common goals and opportunities. Rockburn picked up on this example, saying that he had heard the Canadian government position described as “an astonishing turnaround.” Stephen Lewis has been advocating for this policy for years, but its announcement seemed to take even a number of politicians off guard.

Wood said that he would love to see this policy development analysed. Next to agricultural subsidies, this issue has been the biggest sticking point for developing nations. Wood agreed with Stein that it also took moral courage to make the decision rather than deciding to spend another decade studying the issue.

Rockburn noted that he has seen a “steady stream of people” through the CPAC studio who believe that the NEPAD initiative is fraudulent. Stein defended the initiative, saying that although it might not be able to attain the standards laid out in the determined timeframe, she would not call it fraudulent. Strong African voices participated in the process that shaped the policy, which has clear benchmarks and a mechanism for accountability. These demands are not unique to the North, said Stein—many civil societies in the South demanded them. Wood noted that the world and many African nations were at the point of writing off Africa before NEPAD. Many African leaders embraced the initiative, and although concerns remain about some countries’ commitment to democracy and transparency, the fact remains that without the plan, there would be further marginalization and fragmentation of Africa.

Rockburn said that he was amazed recently to be told by Patrick Bond that South Africa is behaving in an imperialistic manner in the rest of Africa. Stein equated this with the emergence of natural leaders, and asked if this is necessarily a bad thing. “No,” she said. “The fact that the U.S. and China will compete in Asia is probably beneficial for most of the world.” Those countries with the most success in a region or continent—in this case South Africa in Africa—can play a unique role in sharing development experience with their neighbours. South Africa has a process of dispute resolution in place that was much more successful in Burundi than one led by the E.U. would have been, said Stein, conceding that there will be some resentment.

“This is a world of not ideal choices,” said Wood. “Would you rather have strong South African investment, or no investment?” The South Africans are there because they know Africa better than any other country does. They are also prepared to take on the risk for the long term. Asked

if this makes them more resented or influential, Wood replied that both realities are true.

Some countries most in need of help are least capable of meeting the prerequisites set out in agreements such as NEPAD, noted Rockburn. Stein replied that aid is probably the least important determinant. Diversified strategies are needed for aid policies. Alongside NEPAD and the Millennium goals—which are measurable by predetermined benchmarks—strategies have to be available for countries with corrupt or poor governments. Sanctions only work for countries in which civil society has access to some resources. “We are trying to enable civic populations to make more demands on their governments. To refuse to make aid donations is immoral,” said Stein. Wood added that capacity-building strategies must ensure that civil-society workers are not thrown into prison for their work. It is also important to ensure that partnerships are long term.

Rockburn asked if there were governments with the vision to make this happen. Stein replied that there are rich conversations taking place in Canada about the future of development assistance, and developing an appropriate framework for public-private partnerships. “The key issue is staying power. The worst kind of aid is ‘quick in, engage people for the short term, and quick out’ as if you have Attention Deficit Disorder. It’s a disaster!” she said. Canada needs to stay focused.

### **Questions and comments:**

A participant said that the agricultural subsidy debate is lacking discussion on overproduction for export markets, production methods, and food sovereignty issues. Stein replied that she was “mildly dubious” of this argument. Environmentally friendly agriculture has to be examined within a global context in order to avoid downstream problems.

Noting that Canada tends to be a polite country, and that the antiretroviral campaign was “anything but polite,” a participant asked if IDRC should be more obnoxious—if it should “play with the radical pushers.” Wood responded that IDRC should remain serious about the science of an issue, and conscious of the policy debate and its advocacy roles. “Take advantage of the opportunities, but don’t compromise your scientific objectivity,” he urged. Stein agreed that IDRC is a world leader in terms of knowledge networks. The antiretroviral campaign crossed the line between North and South, and brought in the pharmaceutical industry, which has not been a natural partner. IDRC will have to ask if this is a legitimate role, she said, and if so, determine where the funding will come from to develop these networks that cross sectors and boundaries.

Following the presentation and Q&A session, participants broke into small discussion tables to explore emerging trends and possible implications for IDRC. Their input can be found in [Appendix A](#).

## **The Canadian Context**

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**Fen Hampson and Stuart MacLeod**

Moderator Denys Vermette noted that in the morning the focus had been on global issues, and that the afternoon would be marked by a move to the Canadian context.

Fen Hampson, co-author of the background paper on Canadian foreign policy and development assistance, speculated about the impact of the three sources of uncertainty stemming from Paul Martin's imminent accession to the position of Prime Minister:

- Martin's foreign, defence, and development policy will likely be shaped by economic and fiscal priorities, and a declining budget surplus. Across-the-board budget cuts are a distinct possibility.
- Martin wants to change decision-making processes, and proposed add a Canada-U.S. cabinet committee, which could skew foreign policy.
- "Landing dates"—the politics and timing of the transition, the subsequent election and the ensuing policy decisions.

Hampson noted Martin's interest in foreign affairs and, in particular, his desire to reinvigorate the multilateral system while building better relations with the U.S. This is complicated by the U.S. inclination to dictate the security agenda. Martin as Prime Minister will take an active role in the making of foreign policy, the subject of his first public statement after winning the necessary delegate votes to assure a win at the November leadership convention.

Hampson also observed that, in future, development and foreign policy could become more closely tied. The nine countries that are now the focus of Canada's development assistance programs were not selected because of their strategic foreign policy relevance. He also commented on the higher "exit costs" associated with a program-based approach.

There is a growing premium, Hampson said, on good governance, knowledge networks, and local participation.

In the context of defence and foreign policy, allocations and cuts that may affect the level of resources available to IDRC will be framed by defence and security issues, especially with respect to the U.S. Hampson suggested that the Martin team's commitment to multilateral capacity building creates opportunities for IDRC, as Canada's most effective knowledge networker.

There will be a lot of "noise" in the system over the next year and a half, Hampson warned, as many actors try to influence the Martin agenda. "IDRC shouldn't wait for the dust to settle"—this is the time to be proactive.

He also cautioned listeners not to "assume that the current priorities will proceed without interruption." This is the time to expect the unexpected, and to look for opportunities. One such opportunity is in Martin's openness to partnering, and to issue and knowledge-based networks.

There is a real opportunity for IDRC to proactively shape the coming policy debate. It should not be missed.

Stuart MacLeod, co-author of the background paper on the Canadian research sector, offered a

focus on opportunities in domestic research from the perspective of a scientist engaged in population health work.

MacLeod noted that Canada invested an impressive \$18 billion in research and development in 2002, saying, “We punch above our weight.” Fifty-four per cent of that spending was by private industry, 33 per cent was academic, and 10 per cent was government. MacLeod said he is most familiar with government and academic research, but that better knowledge networking must involve all three sectors.

Much of this, he said, “is about connectivity and networking.” The synergies in international development research must be improved.

A number of key trends were observed:

- A revitalized environment for scientific inquiry and technological advancement, especially with initiatives like the Research Chairs program and the Foundation for Innovation
- The growth in Canadian research capacity
- An increased emphasis on trans-disciplinary and interdisciplinary models of research, and growing team orientation
- Non-hierarchical research management partnerships and networks
- International interests of universities
- Integration of the research agenda with foreign policy in most OECD countries

Some of the university officials he met with wanted to internationalize the student body, and others wanted to do “big science.” Few seemed to grasp the opportunity in human development, and MacLeod expressed concern that Canadian researchers are “missing the party” in human-development research. He described the international initiatives of Canadian granting councils as “embryonic.”

MacLeod said that IDRC should capitalize on a revitalized Canadian environment for theoretical and applied research by partnering with universities, industry, and NGOs. He also commented on the opportunity presented by the innovation agenda of federal and provincial governments, advising researchers to link with other federal research initiatives and centres of excellence, to try to build synergistic relationships.

He urged his listeners to build on the advances in information and communications technology and the foundations laid by IDRC in development settings, and re-emphasizing strengths in problem solving, the social sciences, and environmental, agricultural, and health research. IDRC should work with academics to build both careers and student programs, while trying to engage the public with IDRC and CIDA human development agendas.

Finally, MacLeod spoke of the importance of clarifying federal and provincial research policies. He quoted U.S. Senator John Hightower: “There ain’t nothing in the middle of the road but yellow lines and dead armadillos.” IDRC, he said, “must get out of the middle of the road.”

## Questions and comments:

“There must be southern research to solve southern problems,” said a participant. For the research IDRC funds, the ends are important, but so are the means, and the process must be driven from the south. MacLeod replied that academics don’t want to drive the research agenda, but they want it to have “a Canadian feel.” Researchers want to be full partners, with the opportunity to train Canadian as well as international students.

IDRC has worked with considerable success to stimulate interest in development research at Canadian universities, but is in danger of being by-passed, commented a participant. Reward schemes do not favour multi-disciplinary work and non-proprietary principles of networks. “There isn’t a big incentive for them to partner with us. There is a big incentive for us to partner with them.” MacLeod agreed that these are volatile times, and that a further rearrangement of the research landscape is likely, although little new money is likely to become available. “University officials still think in terms of big science,” rather than the sort of research IDRC does.

Hampson said that IDRC was an important source of comparative advantage. “As universities internationalize themselves, they need a lot of advice as they look to partnerships,” he said. There is an important role for IDRC, helping institutions find strategic partners in the developing world. There are also opportunities to do new kinds of research, especially in the area of health—from genome-based high-technology work to basic public health. He also urged listeners not to see the universities as competition. “You’re going after different pots of money,” he said. There is a need to be creative in leveraging resources, including large U.S. foundations, where there is a renewed interest in international research.

“Will Canadian ODA continue to go to the nine target countries?” a participant asked. Hampson’s co-author Hay said that there is greater structure to Canadian ODA priorities as a result of the shift from project to program based work, an approach that has raised the cost of disengagement. The amount of change we see will depend on the new government’s policy and fiscal priorities. Hay said there had been talk from Martin’s foreign policy team of something modelled on the British system: one pot of money for regular programming, and another for contingencies, with a number of agencies holding vetoes. The logic of a program-based approach is that multiparty agreements are more difficult to break. Over the long term, however, that ties policy-makers’ hands. “I don’t see how the nine-country focus will endure,” he concluded.

How threatened is IDRC by the “throw-the-bums-out mentality” that seems an increasingly prevalent feature of Canadian politics, asked another participant. Hampson replied, “I don’t think IDRC is very much on the radar screen in debates on national priorities.” If you’re not noticed you don’t become a target, he continued, except when resources are scarce. “The challenge is to develop a domestic constituency that will support your work,” starting with the university community. MacLeod added, “Canadian researchers are aware as never before of the need to court the public...the only thing worse than being talked about is not being talked about.”

There is only so much IDRC can do to encourage young researchers to focus on international development. What are the universities doing? MacLeod said it is difficult to attract students and faculty into the development field, and not solely because of a shortage of resources. Multi-

author articles in obscure journals don't impress tenure committees nearly as much as publication in *Science*. The creation of some Canada Research Chairs in international development would be an important step.

A participant asked what sort of problems the focus on commercialization of research creates for university researchers. Commercialization is nothing new, even for much IDRC-related research, MacLeod said, adding, "I don't see that as a particular threat." Most public-private partnership work in Canada is, however, oriented to "big science," and it would take a big shift to make much of that relevant to international development.

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## Research for Development in sub-Saharan Africa

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**Mwangi Kimenyi, Gilles Forget, and Connie Freeman**

Mwangi Kimenyi identified trends in research for development in non-Francophone sub-Saharan Africa, and their implications for IDRC. He prefaced his remarks with a few observations on the lack of data, the problem of linking supply and demand in research, and the widening gap in scientific knowledge between sub-Saharan Africa and other countries.

Kimenyi described key trends such as improvements in governance, progress in regional integration, and an increase in the demand for research. He suggested that IDRC should respond to these trends by strengthening institutions that work on governance, dealing more with regional governments and regional research institutes, and providing more core institutional support. He commented on the growing interaction among the government, the private sector, and civil society, and on the need for research-based advocacy. He also drew attention to how access to basic goods and services remains a key challenge and to the widening digital and technological divide between African countries and other parts of the world. He urged IDRC to support research to address these issues.

Alluding to donor fatigue, Kimenyi recommended that donors better coordinate their efforts, and rationalize their priorities on the basis of development challenges. Finally, he spoke of the combination of factors required to cause "a tipping to self-sustained development," citing factors such as democratization, accountability, deregulation of markets, and an assertive civil society. He recommended that IDRC identify high-return activities for each country, and focus its support in those areas that would result in tipping Africa towards self-sustained development.

Speaking in place of Oussouby Touré, who was not able to be present, Gilles Forget gave a presentation on trends in research for development in West and Central Africa. Forget began by describing the deterioration of the environment for research in Africa. Not only does the continent face an ongoing brain drain, but scientists in Africa are often lured from doing research by lucrative consulting contracts with international agencies. Compared to other countries, he pointed out, Africa lacks a scientific base.

Next, Forget drew attention to the impact of the many armed conflicts occurring in Africa and their attendant problems, such as poverty and immigration. He also commented on the continuing trends of poor governance, lack of transparency, and corruption. He concluded by

outlining the key challenges for IDRC. These include facilitating the use of the diaspora of African scientists, strengthening institutional capacity at all levels, promotion of research networks and the use of traditional interventions, and taking measures to ensure the sustainability of its interventions.

Connie Freeman summarized the main themes of the e-discussions that had taken place earlier. She spoke of the relevance of research to policy, and of how to “close the loop,” pointing to key factors such as accessibility and dissemination. Freeman also described the tension between building capacity and doing quality research. She discussed the growing use of networks, pointing out that membership in too many networks could preclude significant participation.

Freeman described some themes that she felt were specific to Africa, such as corruption and the lack of transparency and good governance, the African diaspora of scientists and brain drain, and the “key and tough problem” of child soldiers. Freeman remarked on the erosion of African dependency, and suggested that Africans are increasingly less likely to look to the rest of the world to solve its problems, and that initiatives in governance and democracy are beginning to succeed. IDRC should evaluate the significance of these trends for its approach to partnerships, and consider the “juxtaposition” of “seizing opportunities and establishing focus.” Finally, Freeman commented on the difficulty of obtaining accurate data. She insisted that using “the best that we can find” is not good enough, and doing so often obscures the African reality. She gave as an example how data on the formal economy is often used to represent African economic activity without any reference to the informal sector.

Gilles Forget presented a summary of the recommendations for IDRC made by African researchers at a meeting in Cotonou, Bénin. These recommendations were made on the basis of discussions held at the meeting, on the implications for IDRC of trends in research for development in West and Central Africa. There were a number of recommendations:

- Put more emphasis on regionalization, and on bringing researchers and decision-makers closer together
- Revitalize IDRC’s image as an Agenda 21 institution
- Provide more support for research on alternative, traditional methods for resolving conflicts
- Provide more support for trans-disciplinarity in research
- Use information and communication technologies in building networks among the diaspora of African scientists
- Facilitate the interaction between scientists and the private sector to promote the utilization and commercialization of research
- Promote partnerships among institutions, linking stronger institutions with weaker counterparts, and creating synergies where possible
- Stimulate African governments to create effective policies on research
- Support research that “capitalizes on the tropical nature of Africa” (Forget made reference to the abundance of topics relating to this tropical nature, such as biodiversity, which have been under-explored)
- Stimulate African support for research in Africa
- Support research in areas such as health, social sciences, conflict management, information, and communications

Forget concluded by remarking on the brain drain, not only from Africa to other countries, but also within Africa, from one African country to another. He called on IDRC to facilitate the use of the diaspora of Africans in all areas, including consultants, academics, and those working in the private sector.

Following the presentation, participants broke into small discussion tables to explore emerging trends and possible IDRC responses. Their comments can be found in [Appendix B](#).

Maureen O’Neil thanked the presenters and participants, commenting on innovative use of live television to outline the issues and set the stage for the discussions that followed. She remarked that one of the challenges would be to simultaneously pay attention to Canadian and global trends, and noted that the day’s discussion provided good opportunities to balance Canadian and world opinion. “I look forward to seeing you tomorrow,” she told participants.

## **Day 2 Opening**

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### **Rohinton Medhora, VP Program and Partnership Branch**

John Hardie welcomed participants and explained the format for the day. He encouraged those present to think about the trends and their implications for IDRC before turning the chair over to Rohinton Medhora.

## **Research for Development in Asia**

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### **Kirit Parikh, Roger Finan, and Stephen McGurk**

Rather than presenting his paper, Kirit Parikh spoke about the key trends and issues in the region. Asia is embracing globalization with open arms, said Kirit Parikh, but research and capacity are needed to manage growth, ensure competitiveness and fairness, and address the resulting inequity and the digital divide. Asian economies are growing faster than any other in the world, a trend that is expected to continue. New technologies can only be adopted when the appropriate policies are in place. Governments have to provide the direction, incentives, and institutional setup. The old mantra of “Publish or Perish,” is changing to “Patent and Prosper,” noted Parikh.

Research is needed to increase agricultural productivity and industrial competitiveness. However, equally important is research into the human development aspect of change. The impact of globalization has to be understood not just at the broad macro level, but also in terms of how to manage the transition. This involves understanding what safety nets are needed, said Parikh, advocating for a research push to explore effective policies that reduce poverty and promote human development. “We don’t really know what kinds of measures actually make a dent in poverty,” said Parikh.

Development problems are complex and inter-related. For example, girls who attend schools that lack basic infrastructure such as toilets drop out at an earlier age than do girls who attend schools that have toilets. Ill health is connected to a lack of access to clean water, and “we need to understand these nexuses” and look at cost-effective ways to remedy the problems. Research can

also help with gender equity issues, said Parikh. Female scientists actually perform better than their male counterparts and have fewer absences, but research and data are needed to remove misperceptions. Other areas of focus include literacy, infrastructure, inclusion and empowerment, stakeholder involvement, and policy research and dissemination.

Parikh stressed the importance of protecting the poor during times of rapid technological change. Once again, education—the great equalizer—is key to bridging the digital divide, as is Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). Intellectual property rights (IPR) equate to power in knowledge societies, and “we need to protect the poor from the power of IPR,” said Parikh. This includes ensuring that the accumulated wisdom of ethnic and minority groups is acknowledged. Affirmative action programs that promote the rights of minorities and uphold the rule of law are important. However, programs must be developed and promoted in a way that the majority find acceptable or their success will be at jeopardy.

Roger Finan summarized the main themes in the earlier e-discussions as research questions on water and local governance, conflict and security concerns, programming concerns about public-private partnerships, the emerging influence of English in Asia, and the perceived weakening of university research capacity in Asia. Discussions in Asia also highlighted a rising concern about HIV/AIDS in many Asian countries, the status of women, social structure issues such as tribes and castes, and the need for structural reforms to address significant disparity.

The Regional Report on Asia presented to the Board in October 2002 noted that IDRC’s central strategies for the region have stood the test of time. Small adjustments are needed in programs that focus on peace building, network building, policy integration, and applying governance issues to health research. IDRC might want to expand its programming to countries where it could have more of an impact. The consultations provided feedback that IDRC should not see itself as a marginal player.

Stephen McGurk noted that political support for science and technology remains strong and focused primarily on publicly-funded organizations. However, recent reforms have decreased the number of organizations conducting research, and have led to a growing emphasis on cost effectiveness. McGurk expressed concern over the lack of discussion about the implications of the growing trend toward privatization. Research is taking place in government think tanks, universities, and donor-supported civil-society organizations. Some initiatives complement university teaching and link universities to policy-making initiatives. However, university research tends to be less instrumental in policy development.

Networks, which are necessary for capacity building and policy research, remain weak in many regions. Asia, with its great heterogeneity, language traditions, and national suspicions, pays inadequate attention to non-English content and has stronger links outside Asia than it does between Asian countries. Major technological engines are found next door to states with very weak scientific and technological capacities. Many players are unsure how to integrate technology into their work, yet understand the losses inherent in not doing so. A decade of funding cuts has translated into increased contract research, private-public partnerships, increased professional mobility, and institutional instability. Civil society is weak as are the links between policy making and NGOs. McGurk concluded that the challenges that IDRC faces in the

research setting are perhaps more difficult than is commonly ascribed.

Following the presentation, participants broke into small discussion tables to explore emerging trends and possible IDRC responses. Their comments can be found in [Appendix C](#).

## **Research for Development in The Middle East and North Africa**

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**Eglal Rached, Pamela Scholey, and Rohinton Medhora**

Eglal Rached highlighted the main points of the background paper on research in the Middle East and North Africa, and commented on some of the areas which she felt were insufficiently covered.

Rached described the lack of up-to-date data on research in the region. She noted that the region actually scored highly in terms of level of expenditure on research, the number of scientists, and the level of scientific output. The major problem with research in the region is one of quality: research production is erratic, there are no systems of peer review, and the methodologies used are outdated, with very little work done in stakeholder consultations and participatory research. Rached raised the question, “What is the balance between capacity building and research excellence?”

She reported that the natural and applied sciences, including medicine, engineering and agriculture, receive approximately 90 per cent of research funds in the region. Of the social sciences, economics is predominant. There is low Internet use in the region, and environmental research tends to be ‘scattered,’ achieving limited results.

Rached commented on how most research is conducted in the public sector, in national and regional institutions, where there is limited exposure to competition and state-of-the-art technology. As there are no mechanisms for evaluation or setting priorities within these institutions, research results and research outputs tend to be poorly linked. Rached suggested that the private sector is reluctant to invest in research because of the lack of property rights, poor government vision, and the distortions in markets. She described a weak NGO sector, citing political instability, and authoritarianism as likely causes, yet noted that Lebanon and Palestine, unlike the rest of the region, both have very active NGOS.

Rached then focused on research dissemination in the region, noting that the region is isolated from the mainstream scientific community. Information and communications technology and networking should be used to improve and increase dissemination. The media, too, could play a role in disseminating to a larger audience.

Rached reported how, despite the harsh impact of structural adjustment, the strong sense of social responsibility, family, and the presence of charitable NGOs all contribute in the region to addressing problems of extreme poverty and redistribution of wealth. She suggested that understanding the cultural context of region is essential in arriving at a relevant research agenda.

Rached concluded by raising several points as “food for thought.” First, she recommended that

states in the region play a bigger role in promoting innovation through a well-conceived research plan based on solid needs evaluation, and accompanied by a greater role played by the private sector. She suggested that information and communications technology be used to address problems such as information gathering, access to reliable data, and data sharing. Finally, she called for a performance analysis of existing research, and for the consolidation of networks and an examination of best practices in research networks.

Pamela Scholey gave a summary of the main themes in the electronic discussions that had taken place earlier. Commenting on how mono-disciplinarity and traditional research methods contributed to poor research uptake, she noted that IDRC's approach of working with networks and its support of consultative methodologies are important long-term strategies in the region. She spoke of IDRC's partnership with NGOs, and how small and careful support of NGOs and civil society have potential to produce great results. She noted that this programming approach has to be accompanied by greater researcher security and recommended cooperation with strategic partners that have influence with governments.

Scholey spoke about the identification of "wedge issues," and suggested that IDRC focus its support on change agents. As an example, she pointed out that women's equality remains a key priority, as it poses a fundamental challenge to social arrangements that support authoritarianism. Women's groups have the potential to link with a well-articulated world movement that could end the isolation of the region. She also emphasized a role for IDRC in translating western research concepts and methodologies, and in facilitating southern entry into northern-dominated research debates.

Scholey touched briefly on press freedom. She called for stocktaking to be done on networks, to explore questions such as how networks could be better supported, whether visibility helped or hindered them, and which factors contributed to their success. She described how the impact of September 11 and the invasion of Iraq were poorly analyzed but hugely felt, and how more nuanced descriptions of the regions are "desperately needed." Scholey also urged more support for social, political, and economic research on the family. She suggested that it was important for IDRC to show commitment to working in the long term, as donor commitments had mostly shifted away from strategic support to emergency support.

Scholey concluded by commenting on how western pressure to democratize could shut down local initiatives for governance reform, and how the lack of capacity in the region provided for few alternatives to fundamentalism. She noted that local ownership of the reform agenda could produce sustainable results, and argued that IDRC's neutral profile could be deployed effectively in supporting governance reform and fostering regional networks.

Rohinton Medhora made a few concluding remarks. He mused about the tension between capacity building and the quality of research, calling it a vexing issue that IDRC has dealt with through its existence. "Does it have to be traded off? Or is it complementary?" he asked, noting that this is the fundamental question for how IDRC worked.

Following the presentation, participants broke into small discussion tables to explore emerging trends and possible IDRC responses. Their comments can be found in [Appendix D](#).

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## Research for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

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Léa Velho, and Federico Burone

Léa Velho started by pointing out she was only the sixth woman to take the microphone while 15 men had been on the podium. She presented her paper on donor-initiated research for development in the South, with a focus on modalities and conceptual assumptions.

She outlined various trends in knowledge production around the world. While the trend in the North is toward increased international collaboration in science, the partnerships are primarily with other advanced countries in other continents. There is also a rise in the number of papers co-authored with scientists in the industrial sector. The private sector generally plays a key role in research and development partnerships.

Before reviewing the trends in Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries, Velho reminded participants that research in this region takes place in a very unequal society, with huge implications for science. As a result, research comes from what she described as the local equivalent of WASPs and is very homogenous. Science and technology activities tend to be under-funded and are performed primarily by the public sector. Only a few countries have a sufficient critical mass of researchers, while the rest have difficulties producing high-quality, socially relevant research. LAC researchers are generally isolated and marginalized from the international mainstream.

While South-South partnerships are slowly increasing, the proportion of internationally co-authored articles produced by North-South partnerships reached a plateau last year at 30 percent. Velho pointed out that, most of the time, the partner in the South is a university or a government institute. It is important to remember, she stressed, that comparisons are difficult due to the different meanings given to partnerships and the diverging motivations behind them. North-North partnerships, for example, are often motivated by a desire for complementarity and shared costs and risks. On the other hand, North-South partnerships are often driven by geopolitical reasons, a will to address transnational problems, the need to access unique sites, facilities or population groups, or simply by research donor imperatives. Another characteristic of North-South partnerships is that they are supported by a formal framework and a budget provided by Northern partners.

Over the last few years, donors have been increasingly concerned with evaluating those partnerships. The evaluations that were done revealed some important problems:

- Too many research projects are still managed from the North and are dependent on the goodwill of donors.
- There is asymmetry in project ownership.
- North-South partnerships have had very little impact on sustainable development.

The main reason for this limited impact, Velho advanced, is that the modalities of North-South partnerships rest upon donors' assumptions on knowledge production and utilization, and "these assumptions are mistaken."

Velho then presented the various paradigms, starting with the one developed post-World War II, on which North-South collaboration is still based. At the time, she explained, science was thought to be neutral and based on its own internal logic. The belief was that scientists produced knowledge that resulted in good science, which was put to good uses. In this framework, it did not make sense to develop science in the South since it was felt it could be produced in the North and simply transferred to the South.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the neutrality of science was discussed. With increased demands for science, governments were unable to do it all and had to set priorities. These were usually decided by the market and donors believed they knew what the priorities were. The conception of science remained very linear.

With the 1980s and '90s came the realization that science was not made only by scientists and that innovation took place in a non-linear way. The demands of the various actors started to be taken into account. The new way to look at science included a new focus on generating alliances and partnerships. A new paradigm developed that included a focus on learning how science and innovation take place and on incorporating indigenous knowledge.

Contrasting it with the old but still prevalent belief that knowledge flows from the North to the South, Velho stressed the need for a new approach in which research is socially relevant and empowers Southern communities.

Federico Burone summarized the main challenges identified in the electronic comments:

- Find a way to invest in the intellectual capital as a component of the economic and social agenda;
- Deal with the emerging complexity of capacity building in the increasingly transnational context;
- Balance the needs for donor support and credible research, credibility being endangered when there is too much donor intervention.

While IDRC must continue to enhance its Southern partners' abilities, Burone concluded, it must also think of ways to increase productivity and opportunities with more dispersed and balanced research in the regions, as well as find ways to increase its own credibility and relevance.

Following the presentation session, participants broke into small discussion tables to explore emerging trends and possible IDRC responses. Their comments can be found in [Appendix E](#).

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## Research for Development in the South

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### André Martens

André Martens, professor of economics at the Centre de recherche et de développement en économique (CRDE) and in the Department of Economics, at the University of Montreal, explained that, rather than summarize the regional papers, the coordination of which was his

responsibility, he would outline key issues and trends, and comment on the role IDRC should play in the field of research for development.

One constant problem with IDRC, he joked, is that one is often disappointed to find out that the new idea he or she is proposing has already been implemented, or at least put on its agenda, by the Centre.

Martens outlined the following key issues:

- Economic growth will continue to be a necessary condition for development, if we want to go beyond managing poverty. While many people deplore the primacy of economic imperatives in research, the efficiency argument should not be overlooked, as it is “more convincing than the moral argument.”
- The new sophistication of NGOs must be tapped. Unlike a few years ago, NGOs now often produce excellent research. IDRC should ask itself to what extent it is prepared to go beyond research and into advocacy.
- Given the fact that privatization of research and foreign investments are unavoidable, IDRC must find ways to ensure that relevant and reliable research is produced and encouraged at the local level. What kind of research will come out of privatized universities in the South, and how can IDRC position itself in the face of this irreversible movement?
- The importance of educating scientists starting in elementary school must not be obliterated by the current focus on secondary education. IDRC should investigate what makes a scientist able to criticize and question scientific data.
- Thought must be put into ensuring Southern countries can be competitive in spite of the multiplication of norms resulting from globalization. Martens gave as examples the pharmaceutical industry and genetic engineering.
- The digital divide is growing. The cost of gaining access to interesting electronic research material must be addressed.
- There is a lack of reliable data on many key environmental issues such as deforestation. The other two big environmental issues in the world are water management and city pollution.
- The management of indigenous knowledge must be improved, if political and administrative decentralization are to be successful. There is a marked trend towards decentralization, often under the pressure of donors.

In conclusion, Martens warned against the possible negative effects of the multiplication of networks and of an excessive focus on multi- or trans-disciplinarity. Good old mono-disciplinarity is sometimes the solution, he said. Furthermore, IDRC should not forget that many people outside the organization are very satisfied with what the Centre does. He warned against embarking systematically on new trends when there are many good reasons for IDRC to continue doing what it is doing well.

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## Closing Panel

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In a panel presentation chaired by Rohinton Medhora, Mwangi Kimyeni, Kirit Parikh, Léa Velho, Gilles Forget, Eglal Rached, and André Martens answered questions from the floor.

***Do Southern researchers want to link with Canadian researchers, and if so, why?***

- Yes—researchers want to be involved in stable networks.
- Southern partners develop capacity in the process.
- Publishing in international journals and attending meetings with peers is part of the research ethos.
- Some are prevented from participating by their inability to speak English.
- Northern researchers control the money and the agenda.
- Researchers in the Middle East are comfortable with Canadian partners.

***Should it make a difference who IDRC's partners are? IDRC is interested in cross-disciplinary research, globalization, and the interactions between research and policy making—research that is not being carried out at universities. What are the implications for IDRC's funding and modus operandi of the changing face of university research?***

- Fund projects that create linkages, build capacity, and push a policy agenda. This approach has been valuable in the developing world.
- Universities should continue to be involved. They train students, build capacity, and have a multiplying effect.
- Any research has to be carried out over a long enough time frame to ensure its success.
- The tools to study poverty and equity were developed in universities and research departments. NGOs are not in a position to develop analytical tools, but can carry out research.
- Research programs must be flexible enough to respond to opportunities as they arise.

***How do we define and measure research quality?***

- The only way to minimize subjectivity is to require a large number of peer reviews.
- Researchers have a moral responsibility to have their findings peer reviewed.
- Quality research is methodologically sound and socially relevant.

***What is the most important—and least important—element of a network?***

- A successful network starts with a well-defined goal it wants to achieve. Don't start with a network and then look at what it can do.
- Capacity building is the most important aspect of a network in developing countries. Once people are trained, they should go out and train others.
- The support that some networks receive from CIDA is essential to their success. Governments in some developing nations do not support networks in their own countries.

***The scientific community in some countries is drawn from a narrow band of the elite who are primarily connected to the Western scientific paradigm. Does this apply in your experience?***

- The scientific community believes in a linear relationship between science and innovation—that quality research will find its application. A Dutch research project operating in Bolivia over the past decade has been able to build a new kind of capacity by defining two distinct phases of policy development, and by developing researchers who can work collectively. The new ministry in the Netherlands responsible for the program is contemplating finishing the program. Léa Velho said that she is countering with the argument that this program is not an

experiment—that now that it’s been started, the Netherlands government has a responsibility to sustain it.

- This hypothesis presented does not hold true in the Middle East. However, those from the elite class can take experimental research risks that other researchers cannot.
- The push for multi-disciplinary research is often viewed as patronizing by African scientists, who do not like to be told to “think outside the box.” Scientists want to be treated like other scientists. “Good research is good research,” said Gilles Forget. “IDRC does not support bad research—weird research, perhaps, but not bad research.” Léa Velho disagreed, saying that there are plenty of examples to prove that many factors influence the decision to approve or reject a research proposal.

***Based on what you heard, do you have any gestalt of what IDRC could look like in your region?***

- Make room for decentralized research initiatives generated in the regions.
- Provide room for forecasting the unexpected. What if IDRC’s strategic plan had been set on September 10, 2001? The flexibility to deal with random events is necessary.
- Focus on supporting sustainable research for new policy initiatives and capacity building.
- Explore partnerships with the private sector.

***Is the digital divide increasing?***

- More Africans have access to, and are using, the Internet. However, the gap vis-à-vis other countries is widening.
- Gaps exist between the literate and illiterate, urban and rural dwellers, the rich and the poor, and those who speak English and those who do not.
- Cyber cafés are an urban phenomenon.

Asked for his views on common trends in all the research papers, André Martens said that a distinction needs to be made between science and technology research, and social science research. Regional relevance is particularly important in social science research, and issues of quality and relevance are linked. The private sector is looking at all regions for pockets of expertise, and in some instances, consumer input. Delocalization can take the form a “brain drain” but this is not necessarily a good or bad thing, said Martens. He added that he found the connection between the private sector and the poor fascinating. An article last year in the *Harvard Business Review* (“Serving the World’s Poor, Profitably” by C.K. Prahalad and Allen Hammond, September 2002) detailed how multinationals could improve the lives of billions by stimulating commerce and development at the bottom of the economic pyramid. At present, most of the world’s poor have access to goods that are supplied in small quantities where profit margins are high. If they had access to bulk supplies, their standard of living would improve, offering huge opportunities to private corporations.

Rohinton Medhora commented on a new IRDC project that will develop Internet fonts for local dialects. A participant noted that IDRC’s library is facilitating free access to quality scholarly databases for its partners. It also has a program to link local authors to local scientific publishing industries.

## Toward a Corporate Strategy

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**Maureen O’Neil, President, IDRC**

Although it has barely begun the process of developing this new corporate strategy, IDRC has had the chance to listen to its governors and staff and is set to launch matrix consultations in the regions. “IDRC will be in a listening mode,” said Maureen O’Neil. “We will discuss strategic and program choices. We will not present a clean slate, but will be asking for reactions to programs and ideas emerging from this consultation.”

O’Neil outlined a number of the emerging trends:

- An increase in regional heterogeneity, with global players in each region
- The increasing marginalization of some countries that calls for the continuance of a differentiated approach
- The multiplicity of players that is due, in part, to the push for democracy. Democracy changes policy making by acknowledging and considering stakeholder views
- The increasing role of the private sector, which has the potential of being very positive for non-social-science funding
- The push in some countries to develop private universities rather than restructure public ones. “This is crucial for us,” said O’Neil. “The people with whom we work will still be at universities.”
- Increased interest among Canadian research institutions in IDRC’s agenda

Discussions with the Canadian Research and Foreign Policy “families” have highlighted the need to work collaboratively with other research institutes such as the National Research Council. They also identified a need for IDRC to engage in public awareness campaigns. However, as all IDRC’s funding is programmatic in nature, there is a zero-sum quality to undertaking something not directly tied to programs, said O’Neil. Everyone involved agreed with the need to protect researchers-at-risk in developing countries.

Acknowledging earlier comments that the environment is constantly changing, O’Neil agreed that it is difficult to determine the impact of random events.

At the recent board meeting, governors were asked to describe a number of the new “environmental drivers” that could have significant influence on research for development. As well as familiar drivers such as the huge research gap between North and South and HIV/AIDS, O’Neil cited some of the main ones on the list:

- New technology: biotechnology, nanotechnology, ICTs
- The results expected from aid dollars
- The many dimensions of the new security agenda
- The need to fund global public goods research
- Trade–aid linkages
- Opportunities provided by states in transition, such as Kenya
- Changes in the international development architecture

Examining what this means for IDRC, some of the main points were:

- The need to work more with Canadian research sector – developing country partnerships, but not at the expense of core programming (extra resources needed)
- Preserve IDRC’S value added: a governor had noted “the stroke of genius to work where the problems are” with great staff and strong relationships with local researchers
- Seek ways to reward and retain excellence and look for the multiplier effect in order to ensure continuity and sustainability of effort.

O’Neil concluded by thanking the many presenters, authors, and participants for making this process a reality. She also thanked all those who participated in the e-discussions, and Dawn Lucas and PPG for orchestrating this event.

## Appendix A: Feedback from the session on “Explaining the World Out There”

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*What are the trends in IDRC’s operating environment ( in Canada, globally and regionally) that are of greatest significance to the Centre?*

### In Canada

- Multiplication of international programmes (Ministries, universities, etc.)

### In the South

- Privatization of universities
- Foot-loose know-how
- Research network competition
- There is an increasing diversity of players that can make a difference—IDRC should remain open to working with a variety of “agents of change.”
- IDRC should make the most of being able to operate across different boundaries (e.g. Physical country boundaries some donors are limited to working in.)
- Increasing inter-dependence with other Canadian institutions, specifically the Foreign-Affairs family.
- Reinforce existing models to strengthen capacities of local research organizations (like the participatory-action research approach).
- Loose definition of what “knowledge” means. Avoid the commodification of research outcomes and rather acknowledge the complex nature of the research quest and the mobilization required to put ideas into action.
- IDRC must capitalize upon the opportunities provided by the fact that the federal bureaucracy is preparing for the transition to the Martin administration.
- Members of my group generally agreed upon the need within IDRC to systematize knowledge management, in order to capitalize on lessons learned (and knowledge gained.)
- Fragmentation de “l’internationalisation” a travers la machine gouvernemental Canadienne.
- Gouvernance des institutions.
- Développement exponentiel des universités privées
- Que devrait faire le CRDI?
- Changement de la “livraison” du mandat de l’ACDI de projet a programme
- Articulation du travail du centre autour des objectifs de développement du [millénaire] (MDG).
- Aller au delà des “processus” pour fonder les “enjeux”
- Although we disagree that there has been an increase in players and their effect on policy there appears to be a greater realization that there are a plethora of actors.
- Growing internationalization of national government departments (what role do we play with them?) How do we stay out in front?)
- Growing demand for aid effectiveness: a clear strength of IDRC.

- National/regional (int’l. knowledge systems or systems of innovation vs. self-emerging research networks – these are likely complementary but have very different implications for research support.
- “mediasation”
- Growing civil society
- MDG
- CIDA program
- sécurité
- Competition between networks
- Growing private universities in the South
- In many contexts, our partners are facing greater security risks.
- Sectoral analysis is no longer enough – do we need spaces for (regional, national) political risk analysis?
- What will be the implications on IDRC programming of changes in Central/East Europe and the former Soviet Union over the next 5-10 years?—particularly in the Central Asian states?
- Canada’s ability to manage its relationship (and tensions) with the Bush administration.
- What will be the implications of the growing power of China?
- Recurrence of pandemics in unexpected places.
- Regional integration will be trend—NEPAD an African initiative—has good things (peer review)—conditions imposed by Africans but US dominance (“homeland security”) still a factor (& reacting against) these other regional leaders.
- L. Am. : many sub-regional integration attempts that failed.
- Increased participation of NGOs – civil society action will be a trend.
- We are still Canadian – what does that mean?
- Build alliances with US groups?
- Build alliances with other funders?
- Canada – turbulence, uncertainty; shifting priorities – trying to create a new mandate
- Security agenda? Macro-economic policy – every Dept. has to get ready to cut
- DfID – cut in half aid & have signed off D, D, D
- Re-emergence of regional power and drivers of development (eg. South Africa, Indian, China and Brazil).
- Regional & sub-regional economic arrangements.
- Capacity-building in a multilateral context.
- Brain-drain
- Weak institutional capacity
- Regional integration
- Multiplicity of actors
- Increasing unpredictability & risk in foreign policy/security environment, travel networking, for IDRC and partners.
- How do we position ourselves to share/lead WITHOUT devoting inordinate time and resources to “briefing & teaching” other agencies? We have to know (ie. be confident of) our story line and then tell it.
- Canadian government transition affords REAL OPPORTUNITIES to Centre (knowledge, experience, expertise as real Canadian ASSETS). The “evidence-based policy” niche may be

becoming crowded as much bigger players jump in. Do we respond by anticipating the next big trend? or by doing this (evidence-based policy) BETTER than others (more flexible/more persistent/more capacity-bldg) more EFFECTIVE even if much SMALLER?

- How do we deal with the overwhelming influence of American concerns for security? How do we advance thinking to understand and deal better with the root causes of insecurity rather than its manifestations?
- Globally, the apparently hardening positions of various “fundamentalisms” – religious, political in particular – operate against the free flow of ideas, discussions and often against legitimate opposition and dissent. And yet there are increasing manifestations of strong civil society engagement, for example against unfair subsidies to agriculture in industrial countries. This civil society engagement crosses national and regional borders. In this context, how can development research be relevant and responsive?
- Uncertainty
- Cautious re-engagement within State; more nuanced understanding of and engagement with other actors (universities, NGOs, private sector(s))
- Polarization between visions & approaches to development – how do we engage between & across these?
- Need to analyse & work in N and S and important to recognize, address, and (broker?) between regional and other variations.
- A context amenable to a flexible, network-based organization - & research creates space & mechanisms to rigorous & systematic use of flexibility
- Lots of big opportunities to engage.
- Change in government (Canada) and impact on foreign policy, role of CIDA, \$ to IDRC
- Parallel agendas – strategic interventions to involve key players on issues such as trade, poverty, political and cultural relations, security, etc.
- Agendas are being interrelated in terms of Canadian’s interests
- Interest of Canadian institutions (public and private) are focused on other agendas/regions and not necessarily converging with resources for development: IDRC should intervene in the regions dealing with this parallel agenda and processes
- Processes are demanding more matrix and interregional work; knowledge brokers and risk takers on intellectual/social innovations.
- Multitude (and increasing) number of actors engaged and interested in international affairs & research (national Ministries, NGOs, networks, etc)
- Tension between multilateralism vs. hegemony – internationally (global governance vs. bilateral) and democracy vs. authoritarianism domestically.
- Development assistance – on basis of principles of “aid effectiveness” – becoming more integrated, more owned by developing countries (?), but what is role of research and “new conditionality”...
- Public’s need to be better informed/have understanding of overall framework for development in which “successes” and “failures” can be tolerated.
- Need to effectively influence policy for better development, when policy-making is not rational, linear process, and when actors (governments) are not always as democratic, representative, transparent, etc. as would be desirable.
- More numerous, diverse and active participants in development activities. Many more people to work with, both North and South.

- Development processes are more complex and long-term.
- Appearance of much wider range of players in the “development’ games – not just donors, but NGOs, private sector, etc.
- The “new conditionality” in aid – countries have to have the “right” politics, good governance, no corruption, etc.
- (J. Stein) The rise of global/regional public policy knowledge networks.
- There are “closing” forces at same time as “opening” networks.
- The move of local Cdn groups to participate in international development (CIDA, NRC, Institute on Governance) to participate in int. development with an orientation that is markedly diff. from IDRC ie. our focus to dev. capacity in dev. world vs. the promotion of Cdn-branded solutions to alleviate poverty.
- More information needs to be gathered on how networks work to generate policy relevant research. Are they sustainable? How can they be used to promote development? Should they be mandate driven.
- How has the US security agenda impacted globally on aid flows? Diversion of funds to interest on ‘anti-terrorism issue”
- In terms of capacity bldg. – where do we place funds? Action research, and more academic research.
- The demographics of the research community in the developing world – the group between senior researchers and students has left academia to pursue business interests, to join NGOs or to relocate to the North.
- Rise of NGOs as political actors, sometimes keen to base advocacy on research-based evidence, sometimes not
- Analytical/synthesis function of NGOs half way towards original research.
- Decline of politically funded universities and rise of private universities in some countries. Important for us in terms of capacity building. No substitute for local capacity building in research/knowledge field, unlike private product sector for goods and services where imports of technology takes place.
- Significant dangers in Canadian institutional landscape – internationalization: of concern in mainstream agencies/ministries makes for political conflicts with IDRC.
- Implications of CIDA’s move towards programming not clear for IDRC.
- Trend among granting agencies in Canada to include an international focus in their programming.
- Growth and emergence of private universities, research centres or think tanks in developing countries.
- Increasing encroachment of the “security threat” ideas and issues in the work in development.
- Move from ODA to Int’l cooperation
- Blurring of South-North/South-South
- Shift in development process in southern agenda
- Role of Diaspora esp. Canadian universities/research institutions.
- Emergence of new coalition with Southern?
- Globalization and implications for new coalition
- The changing nature of multilateralism, the role of the United Nations and human rights approaches; more players, civil society organizations; large, global corporate conglomerates;

southern/regional coalitions.

- Requirement to focus (in ODA generally)
- Growth of ICTS as research tool, policy tool & basis for networks.
- Development of new technologies with potential large impact e.g. nanotechnology.
- Underlying theme to research is how does change come about? What institutions are most effective at bringing about development (ie. NGOs, governments, IGOs)? And what such knowledge means for how donors should spend/invest?
- Many larger donors moving into traditional IDRC approaches/areas.
- Most Canadian government Dept. are increasingly involved in international outreach. Will there be two ODAs: ODA (CIDA & IDRC) and ODA (all the others)? PCO?
- The clear emphasis now being placed on the “security agenda” with its inherent consequences on funding, accessibility and transparency.
- The coalition of the uses of technologies in the South.
- Foreign policy context more unpredictable.
- Regional integration (in theory – even if less so in practice).
- Canadian ODA has reputation for being fickle, changes in gov’t. could mean budget cuts – what are implications in terms of ability to commit to long haul, to be flexible, etc.
- Civil society more in policy process?
- NEPAD homegrown – how does this happen?
- Regional powers positive
- HIV / AIDS

***What are the implications of those trends for the strategic directions of the Centre, including the kind of institution that IDRC might aspire to become?***

- Need to incorporate communication better in next CSPF
- As a modest, arm’s length other government body there are advantages and disadvantages. Balancing our role in extended Canadian Foreign policy family and communicating our work and development and leaving space for partners to communicate their own work at times deemed appropriate by them. As a modest org. we have been able to work with partners under the radar.
- Partners appreciate IDRC works with partners in developing ideas and projects.
- Place of IDRC in foreign policy family.
- IDRC should not be a part of the crowd- avoid “crowded” arenas and look forward to new opportunities.
- IDRC plays a role of empowering actors in the South – social capital, fostering social innovation and particularly continuing work on networking and communities of practice.
- The question seems to imply that IDRC needs to justify its existence to its constituents, yet this begs the question of who is IDRC’s client or constituent? Canadian federal governments, NGOs, southern governments, southern academic, donor agencies... arguably all form part of IDRC’s constituency and the tension between their views and agenda define the vibrancy of the Centre.
- A key question is how far should we push research. Is there an obligation connected to generating knowledge that IDRC should advocate that knowledge and pressure for change?

Or does IDRC role end with disseminating that knowledge and allow others be the agents for change?

- Case for IDRC support needs to be finely specified in terms of NGOs’ capabilities and potential role and there should be no compromise in scientific standards of the research.
- Need to understand different types & functions of NGOs, different functions of research to NGOs; to deepen representativeness, strengthen demands on governments for accountability and to strengthen lines of advocacy arguments.
- IRDC needs to think more carefully of how to frame administrative support to these areas.
- We have to stay flexible and be prepared to work in repressive, “closing” systems.
- Challenge- being there for long term without spreading too thin, without abandoning processes mid-way, and staying engaged through ups and downs (not only on the good times but the bad times too).
- Challenge – “innovators dilemma” – what to do when others come in and pick up innovations..... move on to more innovation or stay camped claiming ownership.
- Challenge – effective communication of research results (multiple media and formats) to take advantage of windows of opportunity in decision-making processes.
- Communication: tactics and strategy to be more effective.
- Challenge – working with those who don’t necessarily meet all conditions of “preferred partners,” when these may be the ones who need development work more.
- Challenge – building and strengthening the alliances, partnerships, networks that will take this new multiplicity and diversity of actors to new levels of dev-effectiveness and relevance.
- What is it that makes partnerships and networks thrive?
- Strategies around IDRC’s role as a knowledge broker, in supporting the establishment of networks, in being a (credible) “convenor” of ideas and people.
- Need to continue the trend IDRC has created amongst foreign affairs’ family in Canada (e.g. Last federal budget) so other members pay attention and see we exist and we are helpful. A question of survival.
- Need to be able (savvy) to network within Canada – need corp. strategy and structure that supports President’s ability to network with various departments in Canada.
- Need to think about being targeted – kinds of partnerships we can bring to the table.
- Need to be clear on values, goals, objectives we want to evaluate our work against but continue to place value on importance of program staff discretion to program around these goals.
- How sell ourselves (IDRC) as (small) and effective
- Need to better understand – what message we need to make – to whom?
- How strengthen honest broker role in Canadian context?
- Focus – broaden or narrow? (for next plan) – and how flexibility fits with need for long term focus and commitment (increased focus – increased risk, exposure)
- Building research networks calls for much stronger work in organization – building with our partners.
- Too strong a set of research problematiques can limit our capacity to respond to our partners’ agendas.
- Need to stay at the fore in development issues not stay with the issues which have made us strong.
- The issue of short-term and long-term focus with regards to priorities for development issues.

Is it IDRC’s role to push what it thinks should be priorities due to their long-term nature, or should IDRC be more responsive to national (sometimes short-term) concerns.

- Institutional capacity building is key to ensure sustainability of programming. This can be through strengthening knowledge networks through which consultation is strengthened and priorities are set by the Southern partners.
- Expansion of the regional presence.
- Deal with more players than academic research institutions.
- Consider new delivery model to allow us to focus yet deal with more players – large projects but delivered to a larger number of stakeholders (programs of small projects).
- Engage a broader range of multilateral organizations (beyond UN, CGIAR, etc.)
- Do we want to be responsive or proactive? Or both?
- Continue to have a long-term vision – avoid “flavour of the month,” keep our flexibility.
- Continue to raise public awareness among Canadians; working more creatively with Canadian researchers including younger ones and think about role of Southern intellectuals in the diaspora
- Increase our transparency with regards to how we allocate funds – eg. Online applications? Competitions?
- Trends of Cdn agencies including an international focus could have two consequences: 1) IDRC would have to compete with institutions like NRC, SSHRC, AUCC, and academia for funds; 2) opportunities for joint work with Canadian academics and our partners in the South.
- Challenge to select our partners in the South – ensuring that we do not become the source of core funds for private businesses (private universities or consulting firms) at the risk of taking funds away from civil society organizations.
- Another challenge is to support a model of business for knowledge production and risking veiling other voices and issues.
- Re: the demographics of the research community in the developing world, the suggestion that those who have relocated to the North could be involved in development in the South to a greater extent sounds like an idea with interesting potential.
- Need to be open to working with wider range of partners, including the private sector.
- Be prepared to take risks in difficult environments that other donors feel do not meet the conditions for effective aid.
- Flexibility in the context of difficult (non favourable) conditions re social and political issues.
- Identity of IDRC with other donors – how to avoid major [unclear] and keep our paradigm mandate.
- Magnitude and scale – IDRC.
- Building effective partnerships/alliances, what makes these thrive?
- Being there for the long-term/ups and downs.
- Get better at sharing what we know about how to fund research, implement partnerships.
- Be prepared to work differently in diverse (country) environments.
- Public requires a more nuanced understanding of the potential for research to contribute to improved human development. IDRC should play a role in the education process.
- IDRC could catalyze the development of new international research bodies able to cross national and disciplinary boundaries – aim would be to create a new vehicle supporting a shared research agenda-setting process – North-South, South-South, North-North.
- Those who take risks will ultimately gain greater leverage. There must be a willingness to

tolerate some failures and to acknowledge the bad news with the good.

- IDRC should pursue greater degree of proactivity, flexibility, versatility. May require a major restructuring and identification of new funding sources.
- Increase complexity in terms of North-South relationships involving researchers and civil society organizations.
- To be able to create the right domestic environment for accountability – communicate from the early beginning the complexity of our challenges in order to arrive later on with stories and explanations.
- New dynamic affecting agendas/processes demand flexibility and better follow-up to facilitate influence/proactiveness/opportunities.
- Internal structure with real balance of flexibility; preparation for bigger appropriations from the regions.
- How to tap into and influence “big initiatives” in line with our vision and mandate – but distinguish this from resource expansion. E.g. inform and celebrate rekindled Canadian interest in global health caused by SARS.
- How much, how, should we be a knowledge broker and can we engage with multiple and conflicting perspectives, or do we need to choose sides.
- Exploit the ‘innovation’ mood to be bolder, more explicit re: challenges and paradoxes of development (vs. a “success story” orientation).
- Persistence with partners is one of the most significant factors of success of aid – tension with tendency of donor and recipient governments to jump onto “new” programs.
- If Canadian ODA is becoming more focused, what is the role of IDRC to ensure that the needs and priorities of lower income countries are fully represented and articulated in Canada?
- How can IDRC maintain a balance between coherent programming and responsiveness to clearly articulated Southern priorities in documents such as NEPAD?
- The more focused we are (geographically/thematically) the greater the risks??
- How can we avoid taking (programmatic) casualties?
- Involving Diaspora needs to be handled with care – this is a delicate issue.
- Need to strengthen capacity of younger researchers.
- Pay particular attention to linking researchers/individual projects to larger initiative.
- How to ensure that smaller states in regional blocks of power have a say in agenda setting.
- How to support African states to develop regional policies and programs in certain sectors, or establish regional practices that policies can follow.
- How to support evidence-based advocacy? Have monitoring and capacity building standards. Same standards for all research actors? Better risk assessment and targeting of support?
- Support peer review processes that are interdisciplinary (e.g. Certain kinds of journals)
- Knowledge network handbook (simple and general)
- Reintegration – pay attention to definition of agendas re: regional superpowers – listen to the non-regional powers.
- IDRC still has to engage with the regional powers (if they want us)
- Regional networks an answer to much of our work
- How much of a risk-taker for IDRC e.g. Censorship issues. Need to maintain our flexibility – not just deal with the State (e.g. Know who the activists are).
- IDRC needs to play careful monetary role with mixed networks – we need to be skilled in

reconciling differences.

- In pipeline – certain percentage of high-risk/+ an assessment needs to be done.
- Can we help networks be less dependent on Canadian funds.
- Turbulence – we need to watch
- We need to concretize what we know about knowledge networks to influence new governments.
- Identify areas where Canada has strengths for a knowledge network.
- Identify high profile partners e.g. Genome Canada
- We MIGHT need to reconsider our partnering arrangements with other donors – is it about resources \$ or should we seek out alliances with “kindred spirits”?
- Greater efforts will need to be channelled to the knowledge base of policy – more policy analysis needs to be done (with partners)
- If social learning (better than research for development) is our goal, this has implications for how we work: cross-PI teamwork; going beyond the ‘project’ as our raison d’être; getting time and spatial frameworks right: context; being in it for the long-haul.
- Growing civil society: how to engage with them? Increase their research capacity? Associate them to the research projects we are supporting to advocate the research results?
- Problem: civil society organizations often don’t understand the research environment.
- Increasing tensions between IDRC’s traditional critical stance at dev. issues (geared toward supporting local capacities) versus a more intrusive “top-down” approach of Canadian expertise brought down South to “help” developing countries.
- Opportunity: IDRC pays more attention to build-up awareness among key players in the emerging international affairs of Canadian institutions (capacity-building at home!)
- Avoid a simple take on knowledge and knowledge networking by identifying and strengthening research, and knowledge building, as a social process. Rather than a simple transaction procedure.
- Etre présent de façon stratégique sur la scène canadienne
- Comprendre où nos ressources ont un impact à court, moyen et long-terme
- Concentrer notre recherche mais garder l’œil sur les explorations innovatrices.
- Durabilité des réseaux: les comprendre quand ils fonctionnent
- Développer les ressources humaines chez les jeunes chercheurs
- Poursuivre le renforcement des capacités de recherche à partir des institutions de sud.
- New forms of cooperation with the private sector, including private universities
- How to link networks?
- Not only should the external IDRC operating environment be debated but IDRC should make sure its internal structures can evolve to respond effectively to a multi-faceted world we work in.
- Should we be higher risk? How do we define quality research?
- More monitoring
- How many risky projects
- Journals, publications vs. getting ideas applied
- IDRC flexibility.
- Give support to smaller regional voices
- Understand regional opportunities for solving problems
- If other donors integrate what has been until now IDRC vision of development (e.g. Wood)

How does IDRC keep its leadership in the knowledge field.

- More and more, institutions are asked to work together on a common problem/issue (i.e. MOU between IDRC, CIDA, Health Canada and CIHR). However, the institutions differ greatly in their method of operation (administratively speaking), so that the partnering is limited.
- Strengthen the political aspect of IDRC. Hire more political specialists to deal with the political aspects of the projects as we cannot avoid the political aspects.
- What space to assign to advocacy within the sphere of IDRC’s work given the political contentiousness of many issues – tobacco control is one good example, but there are many others as well.
- If ODA in Canada becomes more integrated what will be the place of IDRC in the definition and objectives of this common or complementary agenda.
- Should IDRC work more with leading countries like South Africa because these leading countries could spread their scope through the world and influence developing countries?
- Other countries may be more open to some leading countries of the same continent rather than being close to developed countries.
- Better organization within IDRC to find out what the program initiatives are doing, to have a better communication between the staff.
- What is IDRC priority concerning HIV AIDS? Millions of people have died of HIV AIDS and affect agricultural aspects in the world.
- Maybe IDRC should put HIV AIDS as a big priority?
- Is Ecohealth role global or not because we do not work with Asia projects. Are we global or are we not global. This is not clear. Clarification is needed as which PIs are global, which are not.
- Is IDRC’s true niche still research in the South by the South, or does IDRC become lost with emergence of new mandates of development organizations?
- Would like to explore the issue of national or regional concentration of RITC’s activities both from an internal perspective and an external perspective.
- Internal: individual programming units working within a broader program area – should there be a consensus around focus on concentration for the broader program as a whole.
- External: multiculturalism as its growing importance in world affairs. Working within the framework of broader international groupings like FTAA, NAFTA, etc...

## Appendix B: Feedback from the Research for Development in sub-Saharan Africa session

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*What are the trends in IDRC's sub-Saharan Africa that are of greatest significance to the Centre?*

- The rise of sub-regional powers in Southern, West and Francophone Africa.
- Rise of GSM in telecom.
- Brain drain: higher paying consultancies with World Bank – to Europe and N. America
- Paralysis of the State apparatus.
- Who are the government agencies that are “Focal Points of Change?”
- How to keep people at universities while building knowledge networks.
- De-investment in higher education and national research capacity and brain drain = tragic circumstances in higher education in SSA.
- Change of strategy vis-à-vis African diaspora; increased global movement of people and growth of trans-national identities as well as trans-national organizations.
- Slow progress in governance constrains ability to influence policy.
- Opportunities for educational refocus.
- Social and environmental vulnerabilities associated with migration processes: rural to urban, diasporic movement.
- Issue of “regional integration” – with possibility of covering more countries than otherwise via regional approaches.
- Continuing (increased?) weakness of research institutions and universities.
- Greater regional interest (?) in research on governance questions.
- Need to ensure that Africa is included (and empowered in this inclusion) in global networks/debates.
- Massive NR degradation – water and soil erosion – nutrient loss – transport of nutrients from rural-urban where they are lost as un-recycled waste. This will continue to prevent development in countries where agriculture remains the “engine of growth.”
- Populations continue to rise and force people to farm in increasingly fragile and risk prone environments (SAT and tropics) These two combine to pose a huge threat to sustainable development.
- Régionalisation des problèmes
- Recherche et faible a travers les institutions existantes
- NEPAD
- Differences in country-to-country approaches – some researchers more successful than others in different areas – East Africa vs. West Africa – Southern Africa.
- Language issue is key – especially vis-à-vis donors/potential or otherwise
- Working on creative solutions to diaspora issues
- Conflict resolution issues/natural resources
- Must be more than just working with a few countries – network promotion is key
- Renforcement des capacités des communautés – faire face au développement locale
- Fuite des cerveaux – avant surtout une problème pour la Chine et Asie du Sud Est

conséquence institutions sont fragiles – aussi faite interne où chercheurs travaillent pour organismes

- importance de l'environnement et contexte politique par exemple au Kenya
- Changements positifs sur le continent africain – volonté politique exprimé dans NEPAD – amélioration au niveau macro, mais dans certain pays pauvreté s'est aggravé (en Asie par contre effets de décentralisation semble plus positive)
- Beaucoup de problèmes aussi causes l'ajustement structurel.
- Brain drain.
- Focus on the basics – food, health, etc.
- Different intellectual traditions between Anglophone and Francophone traditions.
- Increasingly there is a shift in governance in some SSA countries, which has significance in terms of research demand. Governments are looking for evidence for which to shape policy.
- Get the scientific population in Africa being more open and more knowledgeable about other scientific domains. Insert more transdisciplinarity
- Is there really a trend in increasing democratization in Africa?
- NEPAD ownership and real chance of success long-term
- The geo-strategic role of South Africa and regional leadership in FDI, conflict resolution.
- The slow emergence of the AU
- Increased need for conflict resolution and peace building
- HIV-AIDS has reached the “death” phase ... i.e. more deaths than new infections
- Kenya transition is a building block for regional improvement, return and acceleration of the East African Community (EAC)
- Cote d'Ivoire's tumble will change focus to Senegal and Nigeria for West Africa leadership.
- Africans becoming more active in setting Africa's development agenda. (NEPAD is the main current mechanism).
- Increasing democratic processes in more and larger countries (Nigeria, Kenya)
- Aggressive investment activity by South Africa in rest of SSA
- Brain drain – internal and external
- Recent growth in demand/appetite for research inputs to policy among African countries/governments.
- Credibility and confidence in researchers by authorities is low.
- Governance of institutions – ethics
- Poor research infrastructures discourages researchers from pursuing their careers in Africa.
- Environmental degradation and lack of effective policies to control resource extraction.
- No common language exists to talk about Africa's problems, eg. nothing has replaced the 80s/90s concerns with agrarian intensification.
- Continued brutal penetration of capital fuelling conflict (diamonds, oil)
- Some signs of stronger grassroots leadership (e.g. Kenya, Tanzania) in issues related to urban agriculture, SMEs, etc.
- Continued deterioration of formal research and education capacity.
- Increased flow of small arms and light weapons – role of armament industry in general is undermining potential to end conflicts (and prevent).
- The question of youth: should IDRC be targeting youth? How do we engage youth in our projects? How do we include their perspectives?

- There are huge problems such as increased unemployment, conflict, poverty that are affecting youth. As a result there is increased disillusionment, demoralization of youth that is leading to increased urban violence and despair among that group.
- Growing black market economies – arms, diamonds, humans – cannot be quantified and are not factored into our analysis.
- Increased barriers to free flow of labour are undermining invisible safety nets (remittances).
- Corruption conflict
- Demographic trends? Uncertain due to AIDS
- Sub-regional powers are emerging eg. South Africa
- Rise of cellular networks with implications for politics
- Civil society growth
- Better relationship now with social scientists
- Bigger potential in research networks regionally
- Continuing problems with capacity of SS African universities

***What are the implications of those trends for the strategic directions of the Centre, including the kind of institution that IDRC might aspire to become?***

- Is SSA a special case? Should our priority be in capacity-building, possibly of younger generation?
- Do we need to rethink how we define “North” and “South”? Do we need to work more in transnational organizations?
- Be careful with our emphasis on closing the loop/policy influence – put in larger contexts.
- Develop more regional approach
- Sell African case studies
- Continuity of funding with benchmarks
- Réseaux: les construire, les faire suivre
- Role of IDRC as honest broker in bringing together networks.
- Make mapping the policy environment a part of the project development procedure.
- Need to foster ability of Africans to define their own priorities and research agenda.
- NEPAD – to what extent should IDRC work within this framework?
- ICTs – IDRC has a role in working with African partners to leverage ICTs for the dissemination and provision of access to active research and scholarly literature.
- Should NEPAD be the entry point for IDRC?
- What do we know about FDI for S. Africa compared to global FDI?
- Need to include civil society and government in our work
- How can IDRC deal with “degradation” of African universities – should it?
- More research needed on psycho-social health (recovery of youth, etc., from war)
- Health sciences = mental health, too?
- ICTs for D – increasing access of less privileged to technology.
- The Centre needs a more nuanced discourse on “Africa”
- What are appropriate units of analysis? Nation State? Other geographies?
- What social movements deal with real problems (AIDS, women’s access to food and land,

child soldiers; relevant education)? How can we work with these?

- Continue to play a somewhat external (to NEPAD, for example) “agent provocateur”
- Consider program and core support to key institutions, and make longer-term commitments contingent on periodic reporting rather than specific project execution.
- Be flexible and seize opportunities like Kenya, look for countries which can play a regional role.
- Seek regional pooling of expertise
- Seek opportunities to apply our experience in influencing governments to see/use research as input to policies and decisions.
- Examine whether to offer core support in certain cases
- Look for opportunities to bring back expatriated Africans. Draw on current/recent studies/OECD-DAC work. Lots of recently built up knowledge/experience
- Create forums to get policy-makers more comfortable with evidence – based critical commentary/research results.
- Support institutions (including regional institutions)
- Networks supported by IDRC should be a means to an end, not an end in themselves (i.e. Networks set up to meet clear research objectives).
- Cannot afford to focus on institutional building – way too expensive
- Working through regional organizations might not always be the most effective way of doing regional programming (especially those set up by governments)
- Capacity building key as opposed to appropriating technology.
- Continued focus in developing capacity at institutional level that includes providing infrastructure for doing high calibre research.
- Support to organizations to create a research environment for researchers.
- Given the issues that need to be addressed it is important that research needs to be limited to actual changes (e.g. policies, program, training)
- Research capacity building is not just for research institutions. Transdisciplinary research teams are important to ensure academic excellence is found in the front lines enabling/facilitating evidence-based planning
- Dissemination/communication/socialization of evidence is important for informed decision making.
- Re brain drain: Find the “returnees” and work with them – identify sample of Diaspora in Canada, [unclear] scope out program potential.
- Comment appuyer institutions locales – le CRDI un des seuls qui appuient ce genre – faut continuer !
- Faut que conditions dans les pays Afrique subsaharienne améliorent les gens reviennent : gouvernance – garantie de sécurité
- Soutenir efforts de société civile pour contribuer au débat de façon instructive
- Prise en compte des savoirs locaux – favoriser et les faire connaître ex. Solution de conflits env. (faire remonter au niveau national) technologies de l’eau
- Réseaux officiels ne comprennent par experts du niveau local faut trouver façon de supporter les façons locales – d’échanger les idées
- Voir comment utiliser énergie renouvelable pour utiliser TIC
- Chercher des nouveaux canaux et favoriser connexions avec diaspora
- Explorer des façons de les utiliser dans réseaux de connaissance Nord-Sud

- Faut étudier réseaux déjà existants
- Besoin de plus d'analyse et recherché sur effets de décentralisation.
- Data issues are critical
- Information, not market [unclear]
- Security is hampering movement of HQ personnel
- Regional integration issue is now key
- Research capacity and institution building now less than it was a decade ago
- Long-range funding and continuity is key with benchmarks on an annual basis
- Use existing institution for research?? And networks – reinforce networks to link together.
- Se concentrer sur une série de problématiques spécifiques
- Etre capable de mesurer les impacts que le CRDI aura sur le développement a travers les projets supportés
- La programmation doit s'articuler régionalement mais dans une perspective globale.
- Look at how to “anchor” more research capacity in Africa (i.e. institutions?)
- Work via regional approaches/networking but probably not building regional institutions.
- We need South-to-South networking
- Regional approach but on global issues, windows for real opportunities.

## Appendix C: Feedback from the Research for Development in Asia Session

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### *What are the trends in Asia that are of greatest significance to the Centre?*

- Huge complexity of countries/region/subregion
- Issue of technology – increasing demand for patents
- India’s rejection of Canada as a bilateral donor
- More differentiated research environment.
- Maybe shouldn’t think regions at all – should be linking similar countries.
- (As in other regions) tremendous heterogeneity of experience and relationship to research / eg. India, China on one hand; Southeast Asia / Indochina on the other). What links are desirable and feasible between research institutions from this region?
- Growing diversity and both stronger and weaker economies.
- Issues relating to environment were not as prominent as expected in presentations. There are numerous issues but also some discrepancies between the trends and RD discussion – for example on local water management versus urban/rural issues.
- Impact of extremist militants in parts (at least) of the region.
- The dual reality of economic development in the region – modern, high developed co-existing with the poor and excluded.
- Trend towards competitive grant-making. How best to use it in support of national S&T policy. Managing such projects.
- Increased conflicts (Pakistan, Afghanistan, Philippines, Burma, Nepal, Indonesia, India, N. Korea...) developments improving peace (Sri Lanka).
- Global economic growth engine (China, S. Korea, Japan) competing with Europe/N. America.
- As with other regions it appears that there has been a proliferation of institutions, organizations, etc. for IDRC to work with. S. McGurk spoke about the weak links with civil society in Asia.
- Indonesia, Pakistan, Indonesia, Philippines – all relatively unstable and such instability appears to be growing in the region.
- Vast disparities between countries.
- Civil Society continues to be weak in many of the countries in the region.
- Do not forget the communities – their needs in research (identifying and conducting it), for short and mid-term results/interventions, to build/strengthen communities’ links with policy makers and research institutions.
- ENRM and sustainability related research should not be an “afterthought” in the region! Especially in the case of China expected to grow rapidly, and with the growth of population in the region there is more to wealth management than examining it from a governance lense.
- Migration: rural-urban and also intra-regional migration. It is estimated that in 25 years 400 million rural workers will migrate to urban centres as agriculture becomes more industrialized.
- Youth

- Governance
- Reaching limits – resource productivity – social strains and ethnic tolerance.
- High willingness to adapt, to try risky options.
- Language barriers and translating language and ideas i.e. culture “participation” hierarchies.
- Governance and increasing thickness of relation between government and civil society with attention to local diversity (i.e. languages, culture, reinforce local capacity).
- Digital divide and uneven growth means increasing intra-region heterogeneity.
- Tension between research and development.
- Growing demand for governance and equity research. There is less research on what policies can effectively address, issues of equity, livelihoods, and environment equity.
- Asian environment is split: there exists countries (Japan) which are very advanced, and others (Laos, Cambodia) which are not. Hence the digital divide is growing.
- The great diversity of cultures and languages make the issues of digital divide, peace building, and poverty reduction in general difficult to address on a high level.
- Open networks run into problems with cultural/language at the macro-level. How do we manage the tension between fostering knowledge networks and preserving local research agendas?
- Supporting civil society and participation of grassroots to policy debate.
- Supporting networks in national languages.
- Language – English language preference.
- Limits to free assembly, expressions, etc.
- Regional economic integration
- Uneven development linked to shifts in e.g. industries – implies shifts in employment and possible population migrations – what are the implications e.g. for religious and political conflict – the AIDS epidemic growing in India and China.
- Great strategic, economic and political (security) interest for Canada.
- But Canada is a small player relative to UK, Australia, ...
- Democratization?
- Conflit: développement, poursuite causes, impacts.
- Gouvernance: institutionnalisation, démocratie accès a l’information, droit de parole.
- Réseautage: Sud-Sud, participation canadienne, réseau vs. thématique.
- Programmation nationale et régionale.
- Absence of NGOs in many countries.
- Gaps between countries and within countries
- Multiple languages system
- Nearly nonexistent research capacity in some countries.
- High technology level in some countries, nuclear, space, etc.
- Great linguistic diversity within and among countries
- Great economic divergence among countries
- Social/economic/linguistic stratification combined with lack of civil society organizations point to need for more research on accountability of governments.
- Absence or weakness of NGOs and civil society organizations in most countries.
- Diversity (linguistic, cultural, political, etc) makes it difficult to generalize or have any single approach.

- Governance issues and minority languages
- Lack of civil society – would build stronger case for regional and South-South collaboration
- Themes in language issues/regional integration
- Weak civil society/coherence and donor support
- Shifting power structures
- Enhanced regional cluster approach (e.g. Indonesia and Pakistan?)
- Where is affirmative action vs. equity issues?
- Changing donor partners with India (bilateral aid being re-defined)
- Diversity of Asia is problematic for IDRC
- Work on implementable policies
- CMLV countries focus? (Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam)
- Link cutting edge research to basic issues of development (e.g. ARTs and gender/social class)
- Issues of IPR are changing/ethnic knowledge
- Role of networks should be pre-approved
- Shift of economic power
- Relative weakness of civil society
- Different structures of gender relations
- China/Vietnam vs. India
- Growing importance of commercial interests in directing research agendas in Asia – changing the research landscape – as public research centres are closing and researchers are drawn towards commercially funded areas.
- Disparities between countries and within countries
- Peace and conflict as emerging theme of Asia programming and country focus.
- Mix of interpretation in presentations given huge diversity of region these statements maybe overly simplistic – NGOs unaccountable; civil society is weak.
- Unevenness of region a key feature and ongoing trend.
- Policy follows practice. If true, what is capacity of policy making process to mitigate impacts of technological change.
- Relative isolation of research institutes from other similar groups within country and within region. People better linked internationally.
- Influence of satellite/TV and radio/media is key.
- Role models of Diaspora have been imported in Asia (especially Indian entrepreneurs in USA)
- Brain circulation.

***What are the implications of those trends for the strategic directions of the Centre, including the kind of institution that IDRC might aspire to become?***

- Use IDRC linkages to CMLV (Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam) focus?
- IDRC pressured for more visible impact, yet need to not overextend Centre and know when to devolve knowledge so others can act as agents for change.
- Role for IDRC both at national/regional level in policy related research and local level research for empowering community institutions and perspectives.

- Niche: IDRC more human development than research for growth.
- I believe there are opportunities for the Centre to partner with bigger development players in the region (ex. Australia) re: research for the development of the local scholarly publishing industry (in English or world languages) and work on publishing and dissemination in local languages.
- Re linguistic diversity: implication: need to delegate grant giving facility to local intermediaries? -- support for ICT translation.
- Need for international research networks to assist capacity building, taking political sensitivities into account.
- Country focus
- How do we explore being pioneers?
- Research that matters – dissemination/language is key.
- It would seem that a growing trend for IDRC is to strengthen our support to work with civil society.
- Link civil society networks more actively?
- Use networks of advisors/academic for policy-making/advice?
- Improve role of Parliament/role of legislative bodies.
- Cannot rely on strong work by NGOs or Civil Society organizations.
- Need to be creative and dedicate extra resources to foster South-South collaboration and networking.
- May need to delegate grant-giving functions to local organizations who can operate well in local languages.
- Need to balance work with those who have good research capacity and can show results, with work, with those who don't have capacity and can't show good results quickly or easily (but need IDRC badly!)
- South-South cooperation with Asia
- Explore “international networking”
- Development of local language websites – software for translating
- Work in less advantaged regions of more developed countries.
- Nearly nonexistent research capacity in some countries: link those who have more capacity to those without capacity
- Support some innovative applications – explorations in nanotechnologies, etc.
- tendencies diversifies
- How to focus on South-South in a Canadian environment of wanting more North-South links.
- Move from studying “poverty” to – a). understanding complex dynamics of economic growth, integration and unevenness, b). doing something about it?
- How to engage/support Civil Society vs. research utilization by authoritarian governments.
- Local language networks.
- IDRC needs to think carefully about what its role in influencing policy will be.
- Macro vs. micro “development” research. Trade and macro-economic policy seems to have had some success in Asia – does (should) IDRC focus on local? Or national? themes and issues.
- Top down vs. bottom down approach taken by IDRC in its programming. In light of management discussions of larger, long-term projects vs. many small projects. (Being everything to everyone?)

- Civil Society's impact? Strength?
- Encourage more engagement between the stakeholders through knowledge networks.
- Explore the opportunities at both macro level and micro level engagement by being responsive to not only policy impacts but also the outcome that result in change in behaviours at local communities, which empower them to be more effective citizens.
- We need appropriate programming mechanisms to respond to Asian realities; to facilitate more cross-PI work.
- CIDA closing down India bilateral – implications on SARO because of IDRC/CIDA partnerships.
- Focus on strengthening civil society.
- What does this mean in terms of working towards policy influence? Generally now, we hope to influence the policy process not content; but if we work more with civil society will this change? Will we be more advocacy oriented? What does this mean for what IDRC is, how it is perceived in the future?
- More policy community landscaping by IDRC partners (RAF) and IDRC (CAF) to better understand/monitor policy influence.
- Developing tools and approaches for the aggregation, dissemination and policy influence of the many small grant results.
- Adjusting our programming strategies to match developed and undeveloped institutions in region.
- Defining our approach to and work in the 'stars'
- Language is a huge issue for networking and this is not always adequately addressed by IDRC – which means the loss of many opportunities for dissemination.
- Build opportunity and capacity for regional cooperation as distinct from regional development assistance
- Focus on civil society strengthening
- Address variety and consider limiting countries.
- Need for different (interregional) strategies – difficult to encapsulate in one regional strategy.
- Should IDRC do things differently in India?
- Should we tie in the researchers from “good” institutions into weaker networks.
- What would an “international cooperation” approach be – how different from a “development approach” e.g. Chile's office ? Could this apply to India? Malaysia? Thailand?
- Need to have better source of context – build in regional and intelligence more effectively.
- Country-linked same level of openness, policy problems, etc. (e.g. Brazil, India) researchers.
- Do regional research networks target regional political bodies?
- Support regional networks based on strong national programs, when they have a common regional agenda.
- Can a regional strategy have policy influence at national level? Difficult.
- Build capacity of actors or build results, to influence policy? Both!
- Reconnaissance also context specific. ID leads actors and country on an issue, and build reconnaissance at regional level on that issue. This links role of R.D. and DPA in work on a mass-level analysis.
- Problem focus vs. whole of S&T.
- How will IDRC seek and find partners within this changing landscape?
- Who will IDRC choose to work with – poorest/where most needs exist? The big boys? How

will such decisions be made

- Peace/conflict/societies in transition – these issues cross borders; how will this be accommodated into current country focus?
- Need to have reliable means of distinguishing between NGOs in different regions – see which are ad hoc arrangements to attract money. See which have strong history/rooted in communities/legitimate interest.
- Not necessarily about finding accountable organizations, but about finding legitimate, committed organizations and strengthening their accountability by encouraging their engagement with other stakeholders.

## Appendix D: Feedback from the Research for Development in The Middle East and North Africa Session

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*What are the trends in the Middle East and North Africa that are of greatest significance to the Centre?*

- NGO sector weak but very active in Lebanon and Palestine
- Challenge of women's role and participation in advancing development
- Concern about Canadian foreign policy potentially becoming more aligned with that of the U.S. in some areas ... impact on IDRC's ability to support research in certain countries...??
- Faiblesses institutionnelles par rapport à l'intégration d'innovations méthodologiques et techniques dans le cadre scientifique.
- Publication records??
- Conflit/situation politique ne peut être dissociée du contexte dans lequel la recherche se réalisé
- Réseautage: raisons sous-jacentes au succès ou à l'échec de ceux-ci.
- Développement des capacités: long-terme, très intensif du point de vue des ressources du CRDI, permissible?
- There is some political (NEPAD) and intellectual (CODESRIA) movement towards closer links between North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa; as well, there is some policy openings in Sudan now, a country that (infamously) straddles the North Africa/Arab World and S.S. Africa divide – should we more actively aim to “network” researchers from the two sub-regions of the continent.
- There are opening up of sector specific driven needs for research. These are opportunities to which IDRC can provide leadership. Most of these sectors are politically sensitive hence there is more openness to allow research e.g. economic/trade policy.
- The role of the state is paramount.
- Uneasy coexistence between state-sponsored secularism and theologically based politics.
- Don't understand comment P. Scholey on “elasticity of family” – is this referring to absorptive capacity?
- Weakness of participatory research and social/gender analysis.
- Suspicious of sharing impacts or sharing of knowledge.
- Growing repression based on post-September 11<sup>th</sup> struggle /war against terrorism
- East-West divide in MENA (linguistic French-Arabic)
- Weak civil society
- Researchers often at risk
- State sponsored secularism and religious fundamentalism
- WSIS 05
- CIDA's MENA program has institutional partnerships with IDRC as one of their regional program framework priority
- Focus limited to few countries/ geopolitics dominate the agenda.
- Conflict is excuse not to work on development
- Governance reform/democratization key

- Links between NGOs and State actors is key
- Palestine/Lebanon, NGO/think tanks played a role
- Lack of data/reliable data is key (e.g. census data – controlled/access is issue)
- ICT in Cairo/loss of continuity in programming in IDRC, e.g. Jordan
- Range of countries is vast – Near East—Gulf States, North Africa
- Young population – potential for instability or opportunity?
- Gender/social equity issues/highly literate society
- International influence impacting
- Donor coordination – too little?
- Risks to researchers, and chill on academic freedom. This is particularly vivid in some MENA countries/issues but is a broader trend facing IDRC generally. Where do we stand vis-à-vis individuals at risk but, more broadly, efforts by governments to clamp down on and control researchers?
- The science-politics/activism dynamic
- A very small player in a very complex area – responsiveness vs. focus vs. protecting/following through?
- More uncertainty about the role that research can play in the regions vis-à-vis major cultural, political, tensions, isolation from the West, etc.

***What are the implications of those trends for the strategic directions of the Centre, including the kind of institution that IDRC might aspire to become?***

- If our analysis is strong and we are as clear as this commentary on the paper on how we can have impact, should we not put more effort and \$ into programming in the region? (vis-à-vis SSA where we understand less well how we can make a difference)?
- What are we equipped/capable of doing well?
- Stronger commitment to stand behind our partners
- There may be a role for IDRC to foster greater dialogue with the State (where the State is acting to block or slow potentially useful research).
- Coordinate with donors and NGOs? How can NGOs better drive the agenda
- Language is issue/ICTs/Internet
- Use diaspora in the region/use HR resources/develop diaspora network
- Lack of alternatives/turn to Islamic institutions
- Look at water issue – source of conflict or collaboration
- Key is governance/agenda issues
- What of Iraq/Iran/role of IDRC?
- Use regional network/water?
- More regional offices
- Need to clarify goals: discourse shaping, capacity building, evidence generation, will affect selection of actors and issues and societies.
- Lack of strong research networks in region. How to bring national actors together across countries.
- Gender as useful inroad to further working with NGO sector – social change and effective communication.

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- IDRC can play a role in brokering information
  - To protect researchers – need to be in for the long haul.
  - Network ICT national/local players on a regional basis from the collaborators identified in the scoping studies.
  - There is need for better scoping and strategies so as to have more long term effects in the region.
  - Look at research networks in the region to see how to strengthen these networks and assist their work higher up the cooperation train.
  - Consolidation of, and support to, regional research networks.
  - Increased ICT programming in the region.
  - Need for persistence in funding, long term investment.
  - How portray findings – without overt political implications
  - Value of working with journalists – facilitate their connections with local researchers – dissemination of findings
  - Need to think creatively as how to address capacity development without compromising quality.
  - Projects/programs must have long term horizons, short term successes are unlikely
  - Research focus should circumvent social sciences to a large degree given political and cultural sensitivities
  - Communications research may be the greatest opportunity – can improve public understanding without direct confrontation with governments.
  - IDRC should work wherever possible with networks that cross national boundaries
  - Capacity building at an institutional level will position IDRC to participate in eventual democratization.
  - Encourage, facilitate research dissemination
  - Opportunity to assist NGO sector in becoming more involved in research for development
  - Support scientific conferences in MENA
  - Needed – long-term support to allow for development, progress given hurdles such as instability of the region, gender issues.

## Appendix E: Feedback from the Latin America and the Caribbean Session

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### *What are the trends in Latin America and the Caribbean that are of greatest significance to the Centre?*

- Lessening capacity by national governments to determine national/domestic policies and priorities because increasingly tied into transnational/regional processes.
- Multiplicity of actors
- Heterogeneity
- The present environment may justify our present mode of operations (participatory, applied research for practical applications).
- In all papers and regions statistics used have been misleading either due to incompleteness of comparison or inconsistent sets.
- Large concentration of fairly sophisticated NGOs leads to greater demand for applied research.
- Eclipse of Nationalistic autonomy due to all pervasive influence of trans-national forces.
- NGOs are strong research partners in LAC – more focused on applied research and social relevance than traditional S&T and peer reviewed publications...
- IDRC needs to sharpen its focus on NGOs that can do research even if they are not the same NGOs that are doing advocacy (research to inform policy making, but not necessarily funding advocacy and activism directly...)
- Paper refers to traditional, fundamental science and trends, not the kind of research IDRC has been supporting in the Region.
- IDRC is already working under mode 2, XXI century approach to research – we should keep it, refine it, deepen it, improve it, etc. But we are already doing what the author says Research should be doing.
- No progress/degradation in sustainable displacement of coca crops for the drug trade.
- The U.S.-led security operation is overtaking the independence of a number of weak countries and displacing resources from development to defense, both in ODA transfer payments and in domestic budgets.
- The domination of Brazil and Chile as poles of industry, trade and technology.
- The continued “ghetto-ization” of the Caribbean as a tourism destination, suppliers of immigrants/brain drain to North America.
- No bridge between research and applications to development. Research by public sector not applied.
- Privatization of research and partnership-private sector. Distinction between philanthropy and social responsibility important in assessing whether or not to engage with private sector.
- How we engage with researchers reproduces Northern dominance.
- Social inequality is the biggest issue.
- Increasing number of private sector initiatives (and universities) in the region.
- Strong and long-standing tradition of bottom-up PAR (participatory action research) approaches.

- Gaps between researchers and society(ies)
- Foreign investments in resource extraction and privatization of previously state-controlled enterprise and utilities.
- Social movements, such as Indigenous Peoples, landless, urban low income, are gaining visibility and organizing better.
- Decentralization of government to municipal levels; regional trade blocks
- Security concerns: violence against women, street children, indigenous people; narco traffic
- Natural resource depletion
- Trends towards S-S regional networks for research and information sharing.
- Impacts of globalization (and particularly US policy) constraining policy reforms.
- Donors driving research agenda
- State is principal actor (like MENA)
- Regional differentiation key issue – must keep this in mind.
- Publicly supported research
- How to engage Brazilian social reform
- Strong research capacity in selected areas to build on (Brazilian health research)
- Is capacity issue the issue, or other queries related to governance
- Risk environment is there
- Is American agenda during LAC development?
- Research capacity is in greater supply (e.g. Peru Consortium)
- We are part of the Americas!
- Social, indigenous movements, associations of municipalities are having greater political voice and coming up with concrete political proposals.
- Capacity-building is effective and is leading to lots of creative ideas, new approaches.
- Greater awareness of territorial (spatial, economic, political, ethnic) dimensions to development.
- Decentralization is opening space for civil society organizations and local actors to take on a greater role in governance and policy influence.
- Local governments are engaging in research and also participating in setting the research agenda.
- Reduction of donor activity in LAC
- LAC seen as trading area by Canadian government
- Very high level of research capacity has been built and capacity to set own research agenda.
- Fragmentation of research partners (quick emergence of private universities).
- No partnerships with private industry.
- Although ‘N’ should not dominate, it is important to link the N-S initiatives with an open mind. From project experience, our partners in the S are happy to interact with N elements – it is the ‘learning’ aspects that are most important.
- nouvelles universités privées
- Focus géographique national v régional en terme de développement des priorités – plusieurs agences s’organisent autour d’agenda national
- Institutions: capacité d’intégration des innovations
- Assurer le développement des capacités des jeunes.

***What are the implications of those trends for the strategic directions of the Centre, including the kind of institution that IDRC might aspire to become?***

- It is important to incorporate more of the “blurring of boundaries” that Janice Stein referred to – with respect to: stakeholders, countries/regions, etc.
- Impact of private universities on research progress, partnership and quality
- Impact of private universities on public institutions
- Is there some potential for exploring these partnerships.
- More deliberate, planned devolution strategies in LAC
- Build on the upsurge of urban agriculture in Latin America, taking advantage of scaling out the capacity we have built.
- Need to scale up local perspective on global issues and local experiences in governance to national governments and other regions.
- How to promote sharing of lessons from LAC (e.g. social movements in LAC may have lessons for the environmental movement in Africa, ICT movements, etc.)?
- Develop a modus operandi that sees human resource investment as an issue decrease over time, and financial investment increase.
- Greater attention to attempts to work across boundaries.
- How to engage in regional networks?
- Link to municipalities – local levels vs. national vs. global or regional
- Examine good practice in networks
- Can North change agenda for itself rather than try to affect change in South?
- Fund Southern researchers to look at Northern problems.
- Look at migration – measure through remittances
- Need for alternative to U.S. model
- IDRC presence still key – capacity building vs. research excellence
- CG system role between LAC and Asia.
- Strategic role of IDRC as an option to U.S. research dominance vs. N. American security/foreign policy integration.
- Amongst all possible areas of research of potential interest IDRC needs to keep its focus on socially-relevant research that can reduce inequity and resource degradation.
- IDRC can look to develop collaboration with emerging social movements to identify what is most relevant to needs and to ensure that research is at the service of development.
- Need to question the support of networks as opposed to supporting local organizations. i.e. are “we” (donors, North, elites) inadvertently controlling agendas by keeping networks rather than endogenous organizations operating?
- Identification of research communities connected to communities.
- Address issues of research quality in this context.
- Address issue of incentives for researchers in SS & NS partnerships
- Do networks strain local resources?
- Identification of right partners (or rather, a combination of “alternative players,” representative of more grassroots voices rather than scientific and social “elites”) and perhaps a balanced “blend” of low and high risk partners, may [unclear] in a potentially more equitable production and dissemination of knowledge.

- Explore new and innovative ways of involving private sector initiatives that even if they are market-driven, are also aware of the complex socio-economic inequalities and come up with alternative views to socio-economic development.
- About PAR, identify partners that innovate by doing, refocusing the very same process of “knowledge production.” In so doing, capitalize in alternative (and complementary) process of lifelong learning (especially targeting youth).
- How can IDRC engage with and support collaboration on science in a new way?
- Support more research (in South and/or North) on Northern policies impact.
- Make research relevant to other needs/not just basic science
- Need to develop transnational networks
- A need (IDRC \$) for researchers to focus on the problems of poverty.
- The need to do research on change/policy (e.g. legalization of narcotics) by southern researchers on northern originated problems.

(Mode 2)

- attention to class of “scientists” we fund, needs to be broadened; care in role of Canadian researchers; new thinking on how quality of research is assessed.
- Redefine the process of scientific inquiry as an ongoing process of social learning.
- More exploration of private sector partnerships/funding of public research.
- IDRC will increasingly have to grapple with issue of supporting with evidence and capacity building of local advocacy groups.