

## The Channels of Communication in Federal Democracies – Argentina

### Report

Buenos Aires, Argentina

May 2-3, 2001

#### Objectives and Goals:

- Develop, among university students across the country, interest in the functioning of the federal system.
- Support dialogue between Argentinean and Canadian young leaders
- Bring young leaders together in view of the upcoming Summit of the Americas

#### Major project activities:

The program took place in two phases. The first phase was a two-day conference on May 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> that coincided with the Canadian Governor General's visit to Argentina. This conference, which took place at the University of Buenos Aires, consisted of 200 Argentinean youth participants (between the ages of 20 to 30) taking part in a simulation of negotiations between the provincial and federal levels of governments. Half of these youths came from all the provinces of Argentina while the other half came from Buenos Aires. In a precisely pre-defined structure youth delegates simulated negotiations on their elected theme of decentralization and regional economic development. Four panels of experts on different issues related to federalism were interjected within this two-day simulation, in order to give context and allow youths to test their ideas with the top academics and practitioners of federalism in Argentina and Canada. Those four panels dealt with the following topics: Intergovernmental Relations; Decentralization in Federal Systems: Roles Responsibilities and Jurisdictions; Respecting Differences: Identity and Diversity; Federalism in Canada and Argentina: Learning from one another (Minister Dion was one of the speakers for this last panel).

The second phase took place at the University of Cordoba on May 4<sup>th</sup> where the conclusions of the youths that participated in the simulation in Buenos Aires were presented. This was done in the context of a panel on the topic of *The New Challenges of Federalism* in which, among others, participated Minister Dion, Canadian Ambassador to Argentina Jean Paul Hubert and Dr. Pedro J. Frias, widely recognized as the country foremost expert on federalism. The 50-60 people who attended this event consisted of youths, Argentinean experts of federalism and a number of practitioners accompanying the Governor General on her tour (Members of Parliament, government officials etc.).