

Ottawa, Training Ground for Global Health Diplomacy

While the Summit of the Americas was taking place in Trinidad and Tobago, the University of Ottawa, Centre for Global Health and Centre for Globalization and Health Equity in partnership with the Canadian Society for International Health were positioning Ottawa as a leading centre for the training of global health “diplomats”.

Participants from Canada and the following countries from the Americas participated, Barbados, Brazil, Colombia, Jamaica, Mexico and Peru in a two and a half day workshop on Global Health Diplomacy. Participants were from government, civil society and academia.

Interesting is to note that the course was launched by former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Peter Harder who gave an excellent overview of the major changes taking place in the world. The changing demographics, the changing of economic players on the world scene, which result in a new dynamics in how power is distributed or shared in the world and there is a new paradigm for diplomacy.

It is worth mentioning that this initiative was supported by diplomats accredited to Canada. The Brazilian Embassy under the leadership of H.E Ambassador Paulo Cordeiro de Andrade Pinto had one of his diplomatic staff participate in the workshop and the Peruvian Ambassador H.E Jorge Castaneda hosted a reception for all participants. Letters of support were also received by PAHO (The Pan-American Health Organization) and Foreign Affairs, America's Branch.

The workshop was directed jointly by Dr. Ilona Kickbush, Programme Director of the Global Health Programme at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, Nico Drager formerly of The World Health Organization and by Professor Janet Hatcher-Roberts of the University of Ottawa and also Executive Director of the Canadian Society for International Health.

This event was supported financially by CIDA and by IDRC research initiatives for Tobacco Control. According to participants this workshop gave them a vision of the context in which they work as health experts and also gave them the necessary tools to deal with the real Health and Diplomacy that they face every day.