

2008 Leadership Conference:

The DFAIT of Tomorrow

AS DFAIT prepares to celebrate its development from a tiny foreign ministry to the institution we know today, more than 350 participants gathered in Ottawa on November 27 and 28 to discuss “Shaping the DFAIT of Tomorrow.”

The 2008 Leadership Conference brought together senior departmental staff and guests to discuss DFAIT’s business priorities and renewal under the Transformation Agenda.

The first morning featured speeches by the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lawrence Cannon, and Minister of International Trade, Stockwell Day. Also on the agenda was PCO’s Simon Kennedy, Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet, Plans and Consultation, who spoke about government priorities.

In a panel discussion, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Len Edwards, Deputy Minister-designate of International Trade Louis Lévesque, Associate Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Greta Bossenmaier, and ADM of Human Resources Michael Small spoke about transformation and DFAIT priorities. Six concurrent workshops allowed for in-depth engagement on each of the Transformation Agenda themes.

Thursday evening, Dr. Jack Kitts, CEO of the Ottawa Hospital, offered a keynote address about his experiences leading his medical staff through a challenging merger of three hospitals a decade ago.

The next morning began with a panel on the successes of transformation to date. Gérald Cossette, CEO of Passport Canada, highlighted how the agency quickly improved efficiency in the face of intense public and media scrutiny. Pierre Sabourin, ADM of the International Platform Branch, outlined the establishment of best practices for departmental e-collaboration, including using new social networking tools. University of Alberta president Indira Samarasekera, a dynamic and innovative leader throughout her career in engineering and academia, delivered the day’s keynote address.

The conference concluded with a session on “ideas in action”—how to facilitate change and move transformative initiatives forward. Ideas submitted by DFAIT staff through the Idea Garden were discussed, with a view to moving them closer to implementation.

The success of the conference suggests that 2009 will be a year of innovation at DFAIT, with a renewed commitment to ensure that every employee is part of the Transformation Agenda.

More Conference details and discussion papers can be found on the DFAIT intranet.

WELCOMING OUR NEW MINISTERS

Following the recent federal election, the Prime Minister has appointed a new Cabinet. In DFAIT, we look forward to working with three new ministers.



Lawrence Cannon is Canada’s new Minister of Foreign Affairs. A graduate of the Université de Montréal, with a Master of Business Administration from Université Laval, Mr. Cannon served as a city councillor in Gatineau and was a member of Quebec’s National Assembly.

He previously served in the Cabinet as Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.



Stockwell Day is Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway. Prior to his election to the House of Commons in 2000, where he first served as the Leader of the Official Opposition, Mr. Day was a member of the Alberta Legislature, where he served as

Chief Whip, Government House Leader, Provincial Treasurer (Minister of Finance) and acting Premier. In 2006, he was appointed Minister of Public Safety.



Peter Kent is Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas). Before his election to the House of Commons in 2008, Mr. Kent was a broadcast journalist, working as a writer, reporter, producer, news anchor and senior news executive in

Canada, the United States and around the world. He has a long record of community service.