

# Employment of Canadians at International Organizations

*"For Canada, the single most important priority is to make the United Nations stronger, more effective and more relevant to today's challenges."*

The Honourable Barbara McDougall  
Secretary of State for External Affairs  
September 25, 1991 address to the  
Forty Sixth Session of the UN General Assembly

## Introduction

Since 1978, the Government of Canada (GOC) has had a policy to actively promote the placement and progression of suitable qualified Canadians in responsible positions within multilateral organizations—a responsibility shared jointly by the Public Service Commission (PSC) and External Affairs and International Trade Canada (EAITC). Over several years, there had been recurring evidence that Canadians were frustrated in the process of their employment at International Organizations (IO).

Sensitivity to such frustration grew through the regular visits to IO centres and other activities of External Affairs International Programs (EAIP) directorate, PSC. The scope of the problem was addressed by Ambassador Fortier to Under Secretary of State for External Affairs Marchand in April, 1991, and it was felt that a fuller consideration seemed appropriate. The result is this study which questioned Canadians, past and present, employed at IO.

Little was known about the sample population of Canadians employed at IO and the design of the study had to take that into consideration. The study was structured to encompass three essential elements:

- 1) identify and define the population
- 2) determine (a) what are their concerns? and (b) where are their priorities?
- 3) survey their views with a questionnaire, substantiate the evidence, draw conclusions, and make recommendations.

Employee concerns of a peculiar Canadian nature were distinguished from those of a more generic international nature. The Canadian concerns are of particular interest to EAITC, the PSC, the almost 15 Missions which are accredited to the more than 80 IO in which Canada is a member, and which employ Canadians, and the approximately 25 agencies and departments represented on the Interdepartmental Committee on Specialized Agencies (ICSA).