

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND MEDIA RELATIONS

A Public Affairs and Media Relations unit, under a director-level manager, should be a part of any summit office, and situated in the Executive Office in a staff relationship to the Executive Director.

This unit is responsible for directing and overseeing the development and delivery of a coordinated, consistent and high-quality communications package for the summit, covering all non-substantive aspects (eg. logistical, budgetary). It works closely with those responsible for the substantive preparations to achieve coordination and pursue common communications goals. The overall objective will be to see that public and media perceptions of the summit event, both domestically and internationally, are of the most positive kind.

### Communications Plan:

The communications plan covering organizational matters should be developed as soon as is possible, with a strict set of objectives and steps for implementation by all involved personnel. Channels should be maintained with the Host Prime Minister's office to allow for better understanding as to what the Host and the key concerned Ministers feel is of particular importance. The plan will need to be regularly reviewed and revised to respond to changing circumstances.

When the event is held outside the capital, it can be a challenge to promote and sustain the image of the host government as the host of the summit, since other levels of government will seek to build high profiles through their own communications plans. An active media relations effort should be maintained throughout, emphasizing the host's role at the Summit, improving the public and media perception of the summit as a positive event, disseminating information on organizational planning and promoting human interest stories.

In order to maintain a positive profile, a series of carefully planned briefings and news conferences, involving host government Ministers, local political figures, government officials, and sponsors should be scheduled during the preparatory phase. These briefings should emphasize the benefits of the summit to the municipality, province and country. Photo opportunities should be arranged for the media to highlight some of the more interesting logistical arrangements (eg. the raising of the summit flag, the provision of the cars for use of the VIPs, the fine arts and crafts collection, the use of volunteers, design and construction of the meeting facilities). General news releases once or twice a week in the immediate lead-up period can help to create a positive sense of excitement around the summit and prevent the organizers from having to be constantly on the