

Functions of the Department

The main day-to-day activities of the Department of External Affairs and of its posts abroad in formulating and recommending external policies, and in implementing government policies include:

- (a) Collecting and assessing information about developments abroad that are likely to affect Canada's national aims and external relations in pursuit of those aims.
- (b) Supporting the international trade promotion efforts of Canadian government trade and commercial representatives abroad and the immigration activities abroad of the Canadian Employment and Immigration Commission. (A major change in these fields was inaugurated in the early 1980s, with important consequences for the structure and functioning of the Department of External Affairs.)
- (c) Providing protection, assistance and guidance for Canadians travelling or working abroad and protecting Canadian economic interests in an uncertain world environment.
- (d) Conducting negotiations and correspondence with other governments and with their representatives stationed in or otherwise accredited to Canada.
- (e) Supervising and conducting Canada's participation in international organizations and multilateral conferences.
- (f) Negotiating and concluding treaties and other international agreements or arrangements with other countries.
- (g) Fostering awareness and understanding abroad of Canada and its people, and co-ordinating and harmonizing the impact abroad of Canadian domestic decisions.
- (h) Supporting Canada's development assistance programs abroad conducted by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).
- (i) Giving advice to the government, often in consultation with other departments, on the formulation and implementation of policies or programs with international implications.
- (j) Ensuring the co-ordination of the external aspects and applications of national policy (government programs abroad include export-promotion, development assistance, defence relations, immigration, and cultural and scientific exchanges).