

Dept. of Foreign Affairs
Min. des Affaires étrangères

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Taking FLIGHT

Welcome to this issue of *Our World—Your Passport to Change*—which focuses on transformation within DFAIT. Transformation is a big word and an ambitious concept. Our working definition is change that is so deep-rooted, so far-reaching, so long-lasting, that it will have a profound impact on the culture—the DNA—of this organization.

As you know, the deputy ministers launched the Transformation Agenda in April to:

- renew and sharpen DFAIT’s tradition of creativity and relevance in policy analysis and program delivery;
- strengthen the network of Canadian missions abroad;
- provide essential services to Canadians in a nimble, innovative and cost-effective fashion;
- meet the tests of relevance, value for money and accountability; and
- make DFAIT an even better place to work.

We’ve made a lot of progress in eight months.

Any big project must begin with a strong foundation. We undertook many structural changes at the outset, including creating new branches. We reorganized DFAIT’s governance to make sure the direction of key programs—in core and client services, missions, policy and programs—could be set by managers across the department. Directors general have played an important role here, as they’ve become chief operating officers for their bureaus. There have also been changes to the delivery of internal services, made to free up and reinvest resources elsewhere.

With these large and often painful steps behind us, the transformation now moves into high gear with regard to innovation and human resource renewal. *InnovAction*, our grassroots community of agents of change, and the successful launch of the Idea Garden in September, are a great start. Managers and staff must say “yes” to finding simpler, faster and more effective ways to serve our ministers and clients. Our network of regional offices in Canada is critical to this.

Transformation so far has been Headquarters-focused, but our butterflies are about to take flight. A network of change managers—“transformers”—will look hard at streamlining operations in the missions. More resources will be invested so that missions can take on new challenges, with a view to improving services to Canadians. New “e-collaborative” technology will enable staff abroad to become as involved in policy analysis as in program delivery.

The Transformation Agenda has been the catalyst for a passionate conversation about the roles of Headquarters and the field, our relevance as an institution, our ability to “make a difference” in Canada and the world in challenging times, and our corporate culture and core values as a community of public servants. In this, our centennial year, I can’t imagine a better way to celebrate the department’s history than to refit it for another century of service.

Best wishes for the holiday season and a terrific, successful and satisfying New Year.

*Lucie Edwards, Head of the Office of Transformation
Guest Editor*

