

## INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS: KEEPING CANADIANS IN THE PICTURE

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Canada is a member of and contributes to more than forty international organizations. Like other member governments, we seek to place our nationals in positions within these organizations in order to lend our expertise to the formulation of effective policies and to the development of efficient management systems.

Canadians placed in such positions have a unique opportunity to participate in the complex world of international policy and decision-making and thereby broaden and refine their managerial, technical and negotiating skills.

How do Canadians gain access to these international organizations? George Rejhon, Coordinator, International Appointments in External Affairs Canada, and Brian Watson, Director, External Affairs and International Programs Portfolio in the Public Service Commission's Management Category Programs Branch, explain how the federal Public Service is set up to ensure that Canada gets its fair share of secretariat positions in the United Nations, its agencies and other international institutions.

Prior to 1978, the employment of Canadians in the secretariats of international organizations was dealt with in a somewhat ad hoc fashion. In order to improve the situation and to provide a more integrated process for matching international employment opportunities with suitable Canadian candidates, two offices were established. In External Affairs Canada, the Office of the Coordinator of Appointments to International Organizations was set up. Its objectives are: to develop a capability to identify and assess secretariat positions, especially at more senior levels, which, for policy reasons, should be of particular interest to Canada; and to decide on appropriate initiatives and responses to such opportunities.

To complement this new thrust, the PSC established what is now the External Affairs and International Programs

Portfolio, and charged that office with the responsibility of coordinating the identification, screening and, where appropriate, the selection of candidates from within and outside the Public Service, for such positions. It should be stressed that the positions in question are specifically secretariat positions. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has always been and continues to be responsible for the assignment of Canadians in the area of technical assistance.

When a decision has been made that Canada should seek to fill a specific position, the International Programs portfolio in the Public Service Commission conducts a search of its inventory of candidates from within and outside the Public Service to identify individuals who meet the requirements of the job.

Candidates who wish to be considered are assessed by a committee made up of representatives from External Affairs, the Public Service Commission, and the departments most involved with the international organization in question. This committee nominates the candidate who, with full Canadian Government support, is to be put forward to the organization, through the appropriate Canadian mission.

Canadians invited to interviews are provided a series of briefings by the appropriate federal departments and the responsible External Affairs officer at the Canadian mission abroad. The final selection is made by the internal organization.

Between 1978 and April 1984, 275 Canadians have gone on secretariat assignments.

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