

Through the Customs Action Plan (CAP), the ongoing work of the *ad hoc* Cabinet Committee on PSAT, as well as the Canada-US Smart Border Action Plan, the Government has undertaken a comprehensive review of existing CCRA procedures and associated regulatory framework to ensure that customs processes and regulations reflect modern business practices and balance the need to collect revenue, ensure security, and facilitate trade. Supported by technology, legitimate trade and travel is being streamlined, based on a comprehensive risk management system that incorporates the principles of pre-approval, advance information, and self-assessment.

Launched on April 7, 2000 and composed of 17 initiatives, the CAP is a five-year roadmap of customs modernization to promote Canadian competitiveness in international markets, and support the health, safety and security values so strongly held by Canadians. The Plan's main features are risk-based processes for traders and travellers, and a revamped sanctions regime. Although well underway at the time of the September 11 terrorist attacks, CAP implementation was expanded and/or accelerated in some areas to enhance security without compromising the efficiency of the border. CAP advances positioned the Government to take swift action in partnership with the US to develop and implement the Canada-US Smart Border Action Plan for a collaborative, strategic approach for building an even more secure and efficient border.

The CCRA is responsible for eight of the 30 items of the Smart Border Action Plan, including harmonized, facilitative processes such as NEXUS Land and NEXUS Air for low-risk travellers, and the Free and Secure Trade (FAST) program for low-risk commercial traffic, as well as other joint customs activities such as Advance Passenger Information/Passenger Name Record (API/PNR), and in-transit marine container targeting. One of the objectives of the Smart Border Action Plan is to harmonize commercial processes with the United States. Work towards this goal will enable Canada to explore with the US the current regulatory environment with a view to ensure that we properly balance security interests while facilitating low risk trade.

Estimates based on the 2001 CCRA Annual Survey indicate that about 90 percent of all Canadians who had dealings with customs in 2001-2002 agree that the CCRA's Customs staff is knowledgeable and competent. Customs' ongoing training and aggressive transformation plan contribute to ensuring that this benchmark is maintained. Looking forward, a Customs Strategic Human Resources Plan is well underway to evaluate and plan for the work force needed by 2005.

Recommendation 28

The Government should undertake a thorough review of long-term options for the Canada-US border and present its findings to the public. This assessment should include

