

12. Strengthening Foreign Policy Management

Various federal departments, all provincial governments and the private sector have international dealings and concerns that must be drawn together if Canada is to maintain an active and coherent foreign policy. The need for high quality foreign policy management is perhaps greater today than at any time in our history. Consequently, we have taken steps to strengthen External Affairs' role as the central agency of Government responsible for the management of Canada's foreign relations. Senior inter-departmental committees responsible for the coordination of Canadian foreign policy and operations have been created or renewed. We have reaffirmed the authority of Heads of Post over all programmes at their missions abroad and clarified their lines of accountability. The extent, level and location of our representation in several key countries is under active study. Departmental personnel policies now promote the development of the maximum degree of specialization consistent with the need for flexibility in the deployment of foreign service personnel. We are giving particular attention to ensuring that Canada's bilingual nature is fully reflected in our operations at home and abroad. While national and international demands upon us grow, resources are severely constrained. Nevertheless, I am resolved to ensure that Canadian diplomacy is capable of meeting future international challenges.

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This statement is not an exhaustive account of what Canada has been endeavouring to do in the realm of foreign affairs. It will serve, however, to underline the two main dimensions of foreign policy. First, we must continue to seek to advance Canadian interests and respond to Canadian concerns by pursuing a range of significant bilateral relationships and keeping them in good repair. Second, the welfare of Canadians will depend increasingly on finding solutions through international cooperation to global problems; this means that a congenial global order must rank high in our endeavours. It is with these considerations in mind that we will continue to conduct Canada's foreign policy.