

Chapter 2

Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest

2.1 Authority and Scope of Application

The basic authority to determine rules governing the conduct of employees in the Public Service stems from Section 11(1)(f) of the *Financial Administration Act* (revised), which states that the Treasury Board may "establish standards of discipline in the public service".

The Code of Conduct applies to all employees of the Department in Canada and all staff serving at Canadian Missions abroad. Heads of Mission bear the primary responsibility for ensuring that the Code is read and observed by all employees at the mission.

2.2 Introduction

This Code of Conduct is based on the premise that Canadians have a right to expect from all public servants, whether serving in Canada or abroad, a wholehearted and scrupulous commitment to the highest standards of personal honesty and responsibility. In recent years there have been significant changes in certain standards of personal behaviour acceptable to the great majority of Canadians, and most of us are more relaxed in manner, more casual in dress, more frank in conversation and, generally more open in relations with others. Although these shifts in patterns of behaviour are considerable, they do not appear to reflect any fundamental change in general levels of personal honesty and integrity, nor in the public's expectations of how officials should conduct themselves in respect of basic and significant areas of behaviour. This Code is intended both to reflect the latter situation and respond to the dynamic, flexible and evolutionary aspects of contemporary society.

Public servants are not in the same professional position as persons, whether they be employees or self-employed, in the private sector. Since the primary purpose of the public service is to serve the public, the principal obligations of public servants are neither to themselves nor to the shareholders of any particular firm, but to the community at large, of which they are themselves members.

Foreign Service employees often assume obligations additional to those commonly shared with other public servants: they frequently work in areas of considerable confidentiality; they may be rotational and, as a result, exposed at times to unusual and often unexpected hardships; and, while outside Canada they are, in a real sense, the representatives of Canada in the eyes of those they encounter. These obligations, some common to the public service and others unique to the Foreign Service, establish and define the horizons and scope of the Code.

All Foreign Service employees in their loyalty to the community whose interests they serve, in the impartiality with which they carry out our functions, in their handling of public funds and in their use of whatever influence or knowledge may be accorded to them by virtue of their positions, should be worthy at all times, in Canada and abroad, of the trust they have accepted. This Code reflects these ideals and that expectation.

2.3 Relations with the Public

Employees are expected to conduct themselves in a polite, friendly and helpful manner. This is particularly important with respect to employees serving abroad, where the public relations aspect of our work is usually shared more broadly among all personnel. All visitors to our missions, whether Canadian or local, should feel welcome and be well looked after. For example, it is as important a responsibility of each employee