

The implications of this situation for the maintenance of effective consular services are significant. Firstly, it makes it difficult to attract good people into the Consular Program. Secondly, it makes it difficult to obtain resources for the Program. And thirdly, it leads to low morale since the staff perceive that their work is of secondary importance.

In assessing this situation it is important to remember that the success of the Consular Program lies in being prepared to respond to personal crises of Canadians abroad and to disasters, either political or natural. Failure to adequately prepare for such events puts the Department at risk to criticisms from the public and central agencies, as well as threatening the security of Canadians abroad. Therefore it is recommended:

That the Department reaffirm the importance of the Consular Program by including the establishment of a policy by which all officers from the streams involved in consular work would be given an introductory one-year assignment.

5.3 Lack of career Paths for Consular Officers

This concern flows from the lack of an appropriate classification system for consular officers and its implications for career aspirations and paths. Consular experience is not recognized as an important factor for promotion boards. The result is that foreign service officers dedicated to consular work are not promoted whereas foreign service officers dedicated to only political, economic or trade for example, are promoted. The Evaluation Working Group stressed that this practice is recognized across the Department and has a very negative impact on officers assigned to the Consular Program. Further they stressed that action to correct this practice is fundamental to improving the Consular Program. Considering these factors it is recommended:

- That action be taken to recognize the performance of officers involved on consular work by ensuring that these officers can legitimately expect career advancement on the basis of consular work through established departmental promotion exercises.