

TRANSFORMING FOREIGN AFFAIRS

There is also an acute requirement for skills suited to the new international environment, including language skills with difficult third languages such as Arabic and Mandarin. Australia spends over three times what Canada does per officer on language training on a comparative basis; New Zealand, almost nine times.

As Canadians become more active internationally, Foreign Affairs must bolster its consular services, especially to cope with tragedies such as the Indian Ocean tsunami, and to deal with the reality of the activities of Canadians in dangerous regions. Passport services must be improved both to provide better service and to ensure that strict security is maintained.

Key Initiative

- To deal with these challenges, Foreign Affairs will implement a plan for renewal and transformation consisting of a renewed mandate; a rebuilt policy capacity and ability to ensure government-wide foreign policy coherence; a strengthened global presence; structural changes and an enhanced departmental toolkit; and better service to Canadians, especially timely consular support.

CHANGING THE WAY WE DELIVER FOREIGN POLICY

Our challenge will be to reflect both evolving international demands and the need to give more precision to the international relations role in government generally, given the ever-growing links between domestic and foreign policy issues. This will clarify Foreign Affairs' role as:

- interpreter of international events and trends for the Government and for Canadians, recognizing the growing importance of globalization;
- articulator of a distinctive Canadian international policy;
- integrator of Canada's international agenda and representation abroad;
- chief advocate of Canada's values and interests abroad;

- provider of improved consular and passport services to Canadians; and
- steward of public funds, charged with delivering common services abroad on behalf of all Government departments.

REBUILDING POLICY CAPACITY AND PROMOTING COHERENCE

Foreign Affairs will provide leadership across government on international matters, both within and outside Canada. To do so, it will lead in both the formulation of Canada's overall international policy, and the interdepartmental development of "whole-of-government" strategies. These strategies will set annual benchmarks, flowing from the priorities of the IPS. For our country strategies, for example, leadership by Foreign Affairs will bring together Government-wide resources to create a concerted Canadian message and targeted programming. It will be done in conjunction with arm's-length organizations active in-country, with provinces and cities, and with Canadian NGOs, business and civil society. The Foreign Affairs leadership role will be supported by increased policy capacity at headquarters and abroad.

We will enhance our policy capacity to take into account both the increased complexity in Canada's international relations, and the need to work more closely with other parts of government, including those with specialized international expertise. A strengthened policy planning capacity will provide better forecasting and policy leadership across Government, the development of more in-depth foreign policy options for the Government, and expanded influence internationally through wider contact with the policy-making community in nations key to our interests.

While the international environment is increasingly complex, international law, organizations and diplomacy continue to be based on state-to-state relations. Effective coordination of international relations is of particular importance for federal states given the growing international involvement of sub-national governments. For Canada, like other countries, foreign policy and the management of our bilateral relations requires that we speak and act internationally with a single, unified voice.