

*The Political Officer
in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade*

29. The department should adopt Australian rules in respect of the length of reports.
30. Missions should be instructed to explore the feasibility and cost of employing foreign nationals to assist in meeting mission reporting obligations.

Networking and lobbying

31. The department should draw on existing examples of successful contact management practices to develop a template for systematic mission tracking of issues of importance to Canada and the development of strategies to achieve mission objectives.
32. Once the template has been developed, missions should be instructed to prepare operational plans for political work, to be reflected in missions' annual business plans and staffing proposals.
33. Mission operational plans should identify priorities for representational activities, and mission officers instructed to exercise "greater discretion and discipline" in attending or hosting representational events of marginal relevance to mission plans.

Managing crises

34. The department should establish a small team of officers and support staff experienced in the management of crises to review lessons learned and propose standard operating procedures for future handling of crises. The team should look in particular at the recent experience of geographic bureaux and missions and recommend ways of supplementing their resources during a crisis stretching beyond a few days.

Visits and conferences

35. The department should take immediate steps to relieve the burden on political officers of managing logistical arrangements for visits. Missions should be instructed to review current procedures with a view to divesting political officers of administrative functions.
36. Missions with heavy visits workloads should be invited to submit proposals on the feasibility and cost of hiring professional visits coordinators.
37. A Visits Management manual should be developed to provide advice to missions on preparing and executing visits plans. The manual should include guidelines for missions on the level of service to be offered various categories of visitors, and should stipulate the circumstances under which missions should request supplementary resources from Ottawa to deal with situations beyond the mission's capabilities.