

1.18. Welcome Back Reception

In response to previous surveys of returning personnel from overseas assignments, the Centre for Intercultural Learning (CFSC), in conjunction with the Foreign Service Community Association (FSCA), organized a Welcome Back Reception hosted by DFAIT Deputy Minister, Mr Peter Harder. Senior officials from DFAIT, CIDA and CIC were present to welcome back over 300 returning personnel and spouses/partners. The event was a huge success, with many invitees saying they greatly appreciated being officially welcomed back from post by their department officials.

1.19. Returnee Survey and Report to HR

An online survey of over 200 returnees from Canadian Missions abroad, from three Government of Canada departments (DFAIT, CIDA and CIC), was undertaken by the Centre for Intercultural Learning (CFSC) for the third consecutive year. Themes and findings were presented in the form of a report to the three participating GOC departments, with the aim of identifying the concerns and challenges of rotational employees to the respective HR departments.

1.20. Pre-Departure and Debriefing Training of Election Observers for Haiti and West Bank/Gaza

The Centre for Intercultural Learning (CFSC), in collaboration with Canada Corps, Elections Canada, Canadem and the Peace Support Training Centre, trained 106 Canadians prior to their departure as election observers for Haiti's presidential elections, held February 7, 2006. The three-day course focussed on enhancing skills and knowledge in the areas of security threats and personal safety; roles and code of conduct for election observers; and the social, political and cultural dimensions of Haiti. In addition, participants were taught basic Creole phrases and how to work effectively with interpreters. Then prime minister-designate Stephen Harper decided to speak to the audience only days after being elected. His presence and words were very much appreciated by all attendees. The Centre, along with the same partners, also conducted another training session for Canadians going to observe the second round of legislative elections in Haiti. Debriefings and lessons learned were conducted upon return of the observers.

Similar training was also done for election observers to West Bank and Gaza.

1.21. Commonwealth and Francophonie Bursary Students

This year, for the first time, new students of the *Canadian Commonwealth Scholarship Programme (CCSP)* funded by Foreign Affairs Canada, were able to benefit from the same type of orientation course as their Francophonie counterparts. The Centre for Intercultural Learning (CFSC) offers recipients of the *Programme canadien de bourses de la Francophonie (PCBF)* a continuous learning programme including on-arrival, mid-term, and debriefing courses in order to promote the development of intercultural competencies that help them adapt to Canadian culture. In addition, the training helps the students to transfer these new skills to their home country upon return.

