



4.3.2 BUILDING A REPRESENTATIVE WORKFORCE

We want a workforce that represents the Canadian public it serves and where all qualified Canadians feel welcome to work. The following sections describe how we intend to do this in the areas of official languages, employment equity and youth employment.

4.3.2.1 Official Languages

The business purpose of *the Official Languages Act* is to ensure service delivery to Canadians in the language of their choice in Canada and abroad. This requires a workforce capable of providing bilingual service wherever we operate. As well, the *Act* requires us to provide a work environment conducive to the use of both official languages. While the first purpose is not directly related to an enabling culture, it is inseparable from the second purpose of making employees from both official language groups feel at home within DFAIT, a key objective of an enabling culture. Both purposes are therefore treated together in the following section.

4.3.2.1.1 Legislative and Regulatory Framework

The *Official Languages Act* and Regulations require that:

1. the public be served in its preferred official language at federal departmental offices, whether in Canada or abroad;
2. employees occupying positions requiring the use of both official languages in areas of Canada designated as bilingual for language of work reasons be able to work and be supervised in the official language of their choice;
3. members of both linguistic groups have equal opportunities for employment and advancement, leading to a workforce that reflects the presence of both official languages communities.

4.3.2.1.2 Proposed Strategy

Increasing the opportunities for employees to exercise their language of work rights depends on senior management's commitment to bilingualism. Despite our continued investment in the training of all EX members to the CBC level, a 1997 employee survey showed little improvement over the situation reported in the 1994 survey. While the proportion of EXs proficient in both languages is steadily increasing, we must put a greater emphasis on immediate post-training use in the work environment of the official language acquired. Therefore, in keeping with the recent announcement of a new policy on language requirements for EX members, and the decision of the Treasury Board to strengthen organizational measures for implementing the Official Languages Act, the department will:

1. identify a senior official, accountable to the Deputy Minister, who will become the champion of official languages within the department;