

foreign service professionals, parliamentarians, academics, other researchers, interest groups, and civil society organizations. Information technologies could also be used to improve interactive connections with the public at large.

The Government agrees with these two recommendations, and continues to support specific events, research centres, and programming which aim to further our collective understanding of North America's relationships. For example, the Government has sponsored a number of major conferences on North America, including the June 2001 *North American Linkages: Challenges and Opportunities for Canada* in Calgary, the May 2002 *Strengthening the North American Partnership: Scenarios for the Future* in Ottawa, and the March 2003 *North American Forum on Integration* in Montreal. Each of these brought together government officials, scholars, private sector and civil society representatives from all three countries to discuss the challenges and opportunities of increased Canada-US-Mexico interdependence, and produced public summaries of discussions and outcomes.

The Government also supports centres dedicated to stimulating research on the North American dynamic and to building links with similar institutions in the US and Mexico. DFAIT contributed funds towards the creation and activities of the Centre on North American Politics and Society at Carleton University, which has generated interest in Canada, the US and Mexico in developing North American studies programs. DFAIT continues to provide funding for the Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration (CONAHEC), a tri-national entity established to advance and stimulate North American collaboration in education. The Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL), an independent, non-governmental organization which contributes considerable analysis on Mexico and on the North American dynamic, receives significant Government support for its activities.

Understanding the Canada-US and Canada-Mexico relationships contributes more broadly to our understanding of North America. In Mexico, DFAIT provides approximately \$250,000 per annum towards the Mexican Association for Canadian Studies (AMEC) and ten Canadian Studies programs. Our embassies and consulates in the US and Mexico maintain links with prominent think tanks, and regularly assist in organizing conferences and roundtables on bilateral issues of interest. In 2002, the Consulates General in New York and Buffalo co-sponsored a conference which brought together senior federal, provincial and state officials with private sector representatives to discuss Canada-US border issues. Recognizing that Canadians need to know more about Mexico, the February 2002 *Mexico Week* convened academics and policy makers from both countries to increase mutual understanding of the Canada-Mexico relationship and to further bilateral discourse on North American linkages. The results of *Mexico Week* were reported in a special May 2002 volume of the Policy Research Initiative's *Horizons*.

