

*designate a high-level political representative and should pursue the model of cooperation that has been developed in the security field by the current Canadian Deputy Prime Minister and the current US Homeland Security Director, proposed to become the Secretary of the new Department of Homeland Security.*

The Government takes note of the recommendation. The day-to-day transactions of the bilateral relationship are managed carefully at the senior officials level across responsible departments and agencies on both sides of the border, with Ministerial meetings reserved for the discussion of pressing issues requiring immediate political attention and/or guidance, as well as for strategic planning and overall management of issues. Canadian Cabinet Ministers and senior officials enjoy excellent working relationships with their counterparts in the United States and Mexico, engaging in regular and frequent communication in person and by telephone on issues of importance. Formal ministerial visits normally take place at least twice a year, often with ministers meeting their US counterparts on the margins of multilateral meetings as well during that time frame, for example, at the United National General Assembly or at annual NATO Ministerials.

On occasion, the Government has appointed a Cabinet Minister or a designated individual to take charge of a specific file or see through a specific agreed-upon bilateral initiative. During the free trade negotiations with the United States in the late 1980s, and then with the US and Mexico in the early 1990s, the Government appointed a Chief Trade Negotiator. Similarly, in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, the Deputy Prime Minister was given a mandate to address security issues at the Canada-US border with the then-US Director of Homeland Security. The resulting Smart Border Declaration committed our two governments to moving quickly on implementing the 30 initiatives contained within the agreed-upon Action Plan. This leadership has been instrumental in guiding the Action Plan towards its successful, full implementation.

### **Recommendation 35**

*The Government of Canada should work to develop closer relations with Mexico, in particular through:*

- *increasing support for initiatives to deepen Canadians' and Mexicans' knowledge of each other, especially in policy-related areas that are becoming more important in North American terms;*
- *identifying on an ongoing basis specific aspects of North American relations that warrant the development of a more strategic collaboration with Mexico in the Canadian interest, and exploring bilateral Canada-Mexico collaboration that may include joint rather than separate dealings with the United States;*

