

TRANSFORMING FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Foreign Affairs is taking a new approach to representing Canadian interests abroad. Because international and domestic issues are increasingly interconnected, many departments within the federal government, as well as other levels of government, are players in promoting Canada's international agenda. Achieving our international objectives requires the active participation of business and civil society, as Canadians themselves are international actors in their own right. This extensive international involvement adds breadth to Canada's overall influence in the world.

But it raises two issues for Foreign Affairs: how to better support the diverse interests of these many new players, while at the same time creating foreign policy coherence across and among levels of government. The "new diplomacy" reflects the fact that our domestic and international objectives are increasingly intertwined, requiring both sophisticated networking and focused leadership at home and abroad.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS TODAY: A SNAPSHOT

Foreign Affairs is a highly professional and globally engaged institution with bilateral missions, consulates and satellite offices in 113 countries, eight multilateral missions, approximately 6,000 employees, and an annual budget of \$1.7 billion, of which almost \$1 billion is spent abroad and \$500 million consists of assessed contributions to multilateral organizations. Foreign Affairs diplomats actively influence international developments in line with Canada's interests and values. Foreign Affairs administers 2,267 international treaties, and offers high-quality services to Canadians, including, in 2004, issuance of 2.5 million passports in Canada, and assistance in 62,000 consular cases involving Canadians abroad.

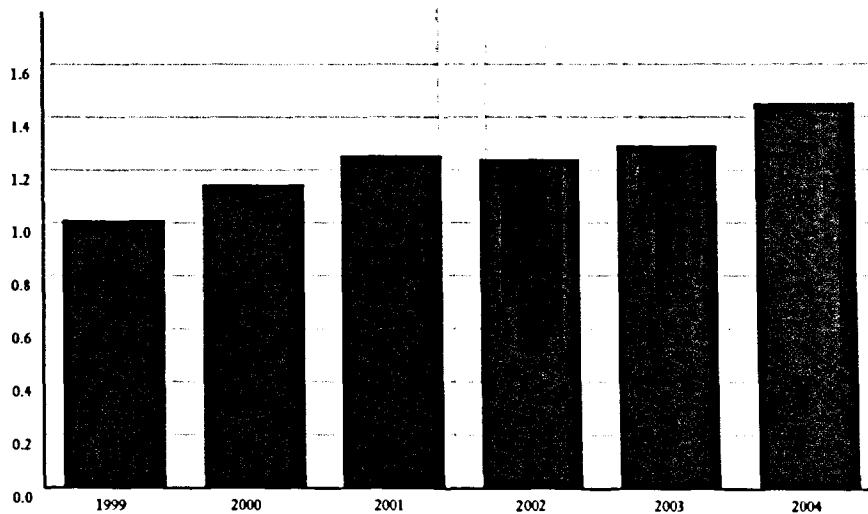
However, key areas need attention if Foreign Affairs is to address the evolving challenges that have been identified throughout this document.

First, Foreign Affairs has become disproportionately headquarters-heavy due to previous spending reductions. While the G8 average is around 50 percent of foreign ministry employees posted abroad at any one time, Canada has no more than 25 percent on posting. As a result, our overseas resources are spread thin in regions where we have increasing security, economic and political interests. This means that our most valued asset—the overseas networks that influence developments in our favour and provide the kind of inside information that allows Canada to anticipate and shape international events—is eroding.

Other departments have become more active abroad, a reflection of the importance of international developments for the domestic agenda for which these departments are responsible. Today, Canada's missions abroad host 15 government departments, six agencies and three provinces. In total, only 23 percent of the over 1,600 Canadian government personnel in missions abroad are officers from Foreign Affairs. This means that speaking with one voice internationally is a pressing issue.

Similarly, the policy capacity of Foreign Affairs needs to be rebuilt. Foreign policy leadership is key to bringing coherence to the international activity of the Government as a whole, to anticipating change and to advancing innovative solutions to the many challenges we face.

Growing Demand for Consular Services
(in millions of cases)



Source: Foreign Affairs Canada