

The conference operations unit also looks after the provision of liaison officers for the Conference. These are regular foreign service officers from EAITC who will work with the individual delegations prior to and during the Conference to ensure that all of their conference needs are met.

ICO has to make sure the media will be able to do its job, and this is the task that falls to the media services unit. The old National Gallery in Ottawa, known as the Lorne Building, will be turned into a media centre for the duration of the Conference, complete with studios for radio and television broadcasters as well as working areas for the print media. ICO will be offering a host broadcast unit, in this case the CBC, which will provide electronic coverage of the Conference and make the feed available to all other media representatives free of charge. The media services unit is also responsible for notifying the media about the Conference ahead of time, accrediting them so they will be able to gain admission to the media centre and providing briefing rooms and theatres where ICO and national delegations can keep the media informed about what is happening at the Conference.

The Task Force has been working on Conference preparations since mid-October, and even this four-month period has been tight given the range of tasks that fall under ICO's responsibility. The normal planning period for a conference of this scope ranges from six months to one year. Mr. van Staaldunin attributes ICO's ability to cope so ably with the planning challenge to the expertise and skill of his staff, and to the cooperation the Task Force has received from all involved.

An important element of Conference preparation is inter-departmental cooperation. Although the Task Force is part of EAITC, it includes representatives from a number of federal government departments and works closely with many others. As mentioned above, the RCMP and the Department of National Defence are playing a major role in providing security and transportation for the Conference. The Department of Supply and Services is involved in meeting Conference procurement and printing needs. Secretary of State Canada is providing interpreters and translators so that the Conference can be conducted in six official languages: English, French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish. Transport Canada (responsible for the airports where the foreign ministers will be arriving) and Public Works Canada (owner of the conference and media centres) are also involved in Conference planning. In addition, ICO is in daily contact with the embassies of participating countries and is working closely with the City of Ottawa and the National Capital Commission.

*Inter-department cooperation
important to Conference preparation*

ICO will probably remain in existence for a couple of weeks after the Conference, dismantling facilities, preparing the necessary reports and settling finances. After that, the staff will disband to return to their regular occupations — at least until the next time Canada plays host to a major international gathering.