

« Je n'oublierai jamais l'aide amicale que j'ai reçue à Helsinki en Finlande »

**Le Premier ministre Justin Trudeau,
le 9 juin 2016**

My colleagues and I were thrilled when the Prime Minister was confirmed to participate in our Global Heads of Mission meetings in Ottawa, in June, 2016. Such gatherings of all Heads of Mission are not frequent, so in addition to being given an opportunity to collectively engage on foreign policy priorities, we were thrilled when our still-new Prime Minister took off his blazer, rolled-up his sleeves, perched atop a stool, and provided us with an hour-and-a-half-long question and answer session.

During the Q&A, an ambassador colleague commended the Prime Minister for taking such an active and supportive role vis-à-vis difficult consular cases, to which he launched into a story about his travels as a younger man. He continued: “I’ll never forget the help I received in Helsinki,

“I’ll never forget the help I received in Helsinki, Finland”

**Prime Minister Justin Trudeau,
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Finland” – at which time all eyes in the room turned to me, as if I was somehow responsible for the good service he received almost 25 years ago. He went into depth about the importance of customer service, and the integrity and professionalism required by embassy personnel around the world to help Canadians in need. Indeed, Prime Minister Trudeau was a well-seasoned traveller, even as a child, but it was in Finland where he discovered the importance of “service to Canadians outside of Canada,” and the memory has stayed with him all these years.

Andrée Nöelle Cooligan
Ambassador of Canada to Finland



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and President Niinistö. United Nations, New York, September, 2016. Photo: Katri Makkonen/Office of the President of the Republic of Finland.



Ambassador Andrée N. Cooligan presenting credentials to President Niinistö. Mäntyniemi, Helsinki. September, 2013. Photo: Juhani Kandell/Office of the President of the Republic of Finland.