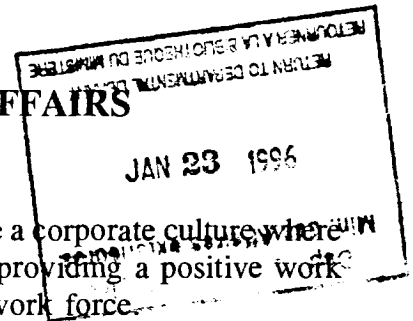


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MESSAGE FROM REID MORDEN, DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



This Department must reflect Canada's diverse demographic reality. To reflect this reality, we must create a corporate culture where diversity is not just accepted, but valued. This Action Plan for Employment Equity moves us a step closer to providing a positive work environment, where under-represented groups can achieve equitable representation and participate fully in the work force.

Employment equity is a corporate responsibility that rests with individual departments and individual managers. Departments have full autonomy to respond to their own organizational and employee needs. Against this background, the Action Plan for Employment Equity commits this department to undertake specific actions for which I will be held accountable.

Merit will not be compromised in achieving employment equity goals. It does not have to be. In fact, merit is the best guarantee of employment equity. When employment practices result in the arbitrary exclusion of groups of individuals, when individuals are denied a full opportunity to demonstrate their abilities, then the merit principle is not being applied properly. When employment practices produce under-representation, we have to examine these practices and make special efforts to ensure the proper application of the merit principle. When under-representation persists, it becomes necessary to redress the situation within a reasonable period of time. In these cases, special employment equity measures are introduced on a selective basis.

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The Department has adopted a practical approach to reaching employment equity goals. Relying on best practices of other departments and the private sector, our Action Plan sets out time frames and actions that have been tested in real-life situations and will not compromise our standards of excellence.

The Action Plan is based on recommendations contained in *Issues and Options*, a report prepared earlier this year by the Advisory Committee on Employment Equity. It was developed by Personnel Branch in consultation with union representatives and employees. I believe these new initiatives will help correct our problems of under-representation, break down barriers and change attitudes in support of a work force representative of Canada's population. The Action Plan also commits us to an evolving strategy that we will review and adjust every six months to reflect organizational as well as employee needs and concerns.

To attain work force equality and work force diversity, we must create a positive environment in which differences are understood, respected and valued. To achieve the goals within the time frames outlined in the Action Plan, we require the total commitment of senior management, line managers and the full participation and co-operation of each and every employee. I am proud to present this Action Plan to you, and count on your full support in implementing it.