

## ORGANIZING THE TASK FORCE

One of the first and most important requirements to be met in developing the organizational structure for the management of an international summit is to make sure that the **Organizing Task Force** has easy accessibility to the office of the Prime Minister or President (or the host Minister's office, in the case of ministerial conferences).

The **Executive Director** of the Organizing Task Force will require an effective mechanism for regularly consulting with the key political players associated with the summit and its location. It is essential that the summit organizers have a regular and reliable method of seeking and receiving guidance from the political level on the host's wishes, and getting help in liaison with other ministerial offices. The organizing of a major international summit usually operates under serious time constraints, and the Organizing Task Force can not afford to go through a rigid bureaucratic line of command.

The **Organizing Task Force** should exist separate from and parallel to the organization responsible for substantive preparations. Regular meetings between the two organizations in a committee chaired by representatives from the host's office should ensure the necessary close communication and coordination. Participation by the Executive Director in the regular meetings of this committee also serves as an effective supplemental mechanism for contact with the political level.

### THE SUMMIT OFFICE:

The organization structure for the **Organizing Task Force** will naturally vary from summit to summit, and will be dependent upon the size (number of participants), importance and the lead time available for preparations.

The creation of one organization to prepare two or more summits will avoid duplication of effort, eliminate inconsistencies and build on experience. It maximizes effectiveness and promotes excellence, although these summits should be a minimum of six months apart if the same personnel are to play a full part in each and thus apply experience from the first summit to the second.

Governments and organizations responsible for hosting meetings would be wise to develop an inventory of experienced international conference planners and re-use them regularly. Although the Summits Management Office (SMO) was no longer in existence in the fall of 1989, the Canadian government was able to hire many experienced personnel from SMO to work on the **Open Skies Conference** held in Ottawa in February 1990.