

## **BACKGROUND**

In the world of work, one of the most rapidly changing areas is the office environment. The whole way of working in the office is and should be increasingly changing and adapting to influences that include:

- \* the wider economic environment that has brought about more emphasis on cost-effectiveness and productivity; tight resources require the team to work more efficiently (increased use of machines, setting priorities, organizing workload, saying "no" to some tasks that are impossible to fit in);
- \* the impact of technology that affects how tasks are to be performed and who does what;
- \* the changing expectations of employees, eg. secretaries now want to play a fuller part on the team, to develop their potential more, assume more responsibilities and make a greater contribution;
- \* the mobility of the members of the team;
- \* the changing dynamics depending on world affairs;
- \* the necessity to accept and adapt to the fact that this is a rotational service.

The roles and relationships within officer/secretary teams should be evolving to meet the changing work pressures confronting the team. In this way the full potential of the team members can be realized and the needs of each member can be met.

## **AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE:**

This guidebook has been prepared for use by both secretaries and officers in the Department of External Affairs. It is meant to be a practical guide for secretaries and officers who wish to develop and maintain productive working relationships. There are suggestions for the effective utilization of resources and for the management of the workload to obtain desired results.