

5.2 Cross-Cultural Issues for Canadian Representatives

- 5.2 a) Canadians enjoy the rich diversity of Canada's bilingual and multicultural society. This is all the more reason why Canadian representatives, while promoting Canada's multicultural identity abroad, should at all times communicate and behave in a manner that respects local culture and values while honouring Canadian values.
- 5.2 b) Every country has its distinct culture with its own values and customs. These particularities are subtle and at times complex, and include behaviour that go beyond customary dress codes or local rules of etiquette. Representatives are expected to make an effort to understand local culture, and before arriving on an assignment abroad, should familiarize themselves with the customs and practices of the host country. Special attention should be paid to the implications of these customs and practices for relations with locally engaged staff. Among other resources available, the Centre for Intercultural Learning (<http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/cfsi-icse/cil-cai/home-en.asp>) of the Canadian Foreign Service Institute provides services including pre-departure sessions on intercultural effectiveness, communication and professional and social behaviour abroad.
- 5.2 c) Representatives are often confronted with the challenge of receiving unsolicited gifts, hospitality or benefits within a cultural context where refusing the gift may cause unintended embarrassment to a local host, official or otherwise. In spite of this challenge, representatives shall not only avoid connections or obligations that