

brief opening statement of 5-10 minutes maximum, followed by rounds of questions from the members of the Committee, starting with the Official Opposition. Copies of the opening remarks in both official languages are to be distributed at the time of the meeting to all Committee members.

In Camera Meeting

Committee meetings are usually open to the public and the media. If a committee wishes to deliberate in private, it may decide to hold *in camera* meetings. Such meetings are usually ordered when the committee is considering some administrative matter such as a proposed budget, the hiring of staff, when it is drafting a report, or upon a request by witnesses when circumstances warrant.

The Role of Cabinet and Parliamentary Affairs (DCL)

DCL is the departmental point of contact for clerks and researchers of parliamentary committees seeking officials as witnesses. Officials who are contacted directly should make no commitments of availability and should refer the caller to DCL.

- DCL issues a '*call for witnesses*' and directly consults with involved divisions on all aspects of the planned appearance
- DCL brings the departmental concerns to the Committee through the Clerks
- DCL obtains Deputy Minister's approval of the proposed departmental witnesses
- DCL accompanies DFAIT officials to the committee session - DFAIT officials are most often at the Director General Level
- DCL tables all the written material, including an opening statement, with the Clerk of the Committee

The Role of DFAIT Officers

DFAIT officers in geographic and functional divisions work hand-in-hand with DCL through every stage of the process. As a result of this collaboration, DFAIT has earned a reputation for excellence with respect to witnesses and presentations at committee sessions.

When preparing materials for an appearance before a committee, please keep in mind that all statements, speaking notes/talking points to be tabled with the Clerk by federal government officials must be in both official languages, or the documents will not be distributed to the Committee members at the time of the meeting.

In the event that a backgrounder is being prepared for distribution to Committee members, please ensure that bilingual copies are delivered to DCL several days prior to the scheduled appearance. DCL will forward the documents to the Clerk, who will in turn distribute the documents prior to the meeting.