The United Nations Economic and Social Affairs Division is responsible for the co-ordination of Canadian policy and activity on UN issues of social and economic development, particularly as regards the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary organs, the special bodies of the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies. International questions of social policy, human rights and humanitarian affairs, and the status of women, fall within the purview of this division.

The Bureau of Public Affairs has been established to bring together management activities of the Department that are essentially devoted to relations with the public or sections of the public at home and abroad. The purpose of this grouping is to seek to ensure correlation of the several activities involved. The component units are: the Academic Relations Division, the Cultural Affairs Division, the Information Division, the World Exhibitions Program and the Historical Division.

The Academic Relations Division is responsible for co-ordinating and promoting relations between the Department and academic and para-academic groups active in fields related to studies and research in international relations. The division is also concerned with encouraging participation by internationalist scholars and professionals in the current analysis and long-term formulation of Canadian foreign policy. To these ends, the division sets up and maintains programs for the establishment and development of contacts with individuals and organizations, such as meetings of consultation, seminars and other forms of exchange.

In co-operation with other divisions, the Academic Relations Division invites academics and organizations to undertake research, on a contract basis, on international relations and foreign policy subjects. It arranges the secondment to universities, on a yearly basis, of senior departmental officers ("foreign service visitors") to engage in teaching, discussion, research and other activities relating to international affairs. Each year the division draws up a list of officers who are prepared to participate in seminars at universities or speak to the interested groups, as part of its speakers' program.

Generally speaking, the division's aim to encourage an informed continuing dialogue and constructive criticism between officials engaged in the pursuit and implementation of foreign policy and those scholars who devote themselves to study and research in international affairs.