

Dept. of External Affairs
Min. des Affaires extérieures
JUL 5 1989
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Introduction

The purpose of the present guide to preparing annual reports on human rights, democratic development and good governance in your countries of accreditation is to **provide a common format** for purposes of comparison and analysis by Foreign Affairs and CIDA geographic and functional divisions. This guide seeks to encourage mission officers to draft reports that are as **objective, as comprehensive and as uniform as possible**, notwithstanding several difficulties officers are likely to encounter, such as problems of access to information, the multiplicity of sources, and differences in political and social systems.

The annual reports were originally used to assess the human rights and good governance performance of Canadian aid recipients in the context of the Cabinet's aid allocation exercise. The reports have expanded beyond this original purpose and are now used in preparing briefing material for Ministers, parliamentarians and senior departmental officials for their use during UN and regional summits and meetings, visits of foreign officials, meetings with human rights NGOs, donor consortium meetings, and replies to letters from NGOs and the Canadian public. The annual reports are also particularly helpful in helping Foreign Affairs and CIDA geographic and functional divisions make policy decisions concerning, for example, export permits for military equipment, credits for export development, aid allocations, and human rights programming.

The present guide is comprised of two parts. Part I deals with differing social and political realities encountered abroad by reporting officers and suggests possible sources of information. Part II deals with the report itself, explaining all its elements in detail.

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

A. Sources

Officers should make use of the contacts established by their predecessors, and the knowledge and expertise of their colleagues in the mission. Trade commissioners will have good contacts within the local business community and among Canadian businesspeople. They may offer a unique perspective on economic management, social programmes, or the cost of doing business (e.g. corruption and probity). CIDA personnel maintain contacts with aid workers in the field and within academic circles. They can offer valuable insights on the human rights situation in your country of responsibility and are increasingly involved in projects with a significant civil and political rights and/or democratisation component. Canadian immigration officers are often in direct contact with police and intelligence services. They also interview hundreds of applicants annually. Finally, mission officers performing consular work may also have the "inside story" on prison conditions.

Officers are encouraged to make efforts in seeking out sources they might not normally meet while fulfilling their diplomatic duties. They should include a "human rights reporting" mandate in their travels to other regions or countries under their responsibility and contact sources outside the capital area (e.g. regional capitals and officials, local universities).

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