



DFAIT is responsible for administering the FSDs for all public service employees abroad, while Treasury Board is responsible for policy and negotiations with the unions.

The following principles underlie the FSDs:

- they should be in harmony with Canadian social norms and expectations;
- they must make it possible for employees to serve abroad feeling that they are being reasonably and fairly treated; and
- they must be cost-effective and simple to deliver.

The basic principle determining the level and type of benefits of the FSDs is comparability with conditions in Canada's capital.

4.3.4.1.2 Triennial Review

The current FSDs are too complex and costly to administer and are not a flexible management tool. They promote an entitlement and dependence relationship between management and employees, and force management to intrude in the private lives of employees.

DFAIT's chief objective for the triennial review this spring is to simplify the FSDs to reduce the administrative burden, ease interpretation, and reduce the incidence of disputes and grievances. As much as possible, the new FSDs should enable employees to care for themselves. They need to be re-balanced for greater equity and updated to reflect the increasing need for elder care, older children in the family pursuing education later in life, and other characteristics of the family in the nineties such as spousal employment and the two-income family.

These are our views, but as the FSDs are negotiated between Treasury Board as the employer and Public Service bargaining agents, through the National Joint Council, the Triennial Review may produce results quite different from what we would see if the shape and substance of the FSDs were ours alone.

4.3.4.2 Spousal Employment Issue

The issue of spousal employment is not unique to DFAIT rotational employees. It is one that also exists for other "rotational" services such as the Canadian Forces and the RCMP. For a spouse of a rotational employee, the constant movement, and in many cases the lack of a reciprocal employment agreement with the country of posting make it difficult to forge a career. The problem in developing a career often affects employment opportunities for the spouse when the employee is assigned to a position in Canada as well. From an economic standpoint, most Canadian families rely on two incomes and, eventually, on two pensions (living standards must be adjusted where this is not the case).

The spousal employment issue has proven to be a particularly difficult one to resolve and, in fact, there is likely no totally satisfactory solution available. Extensive effort has been made over several decades by the department and the Foreign Service Community