



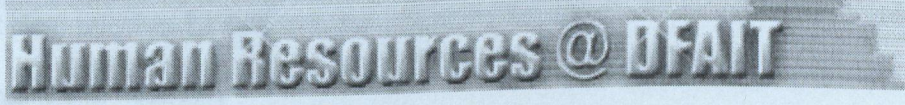
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Ministère des Affaires étrangères et du Commerce international

Canada

Page modified: Tuesday 2002-8-13 9:38

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Comparative Study on the Terms and Conditions of Employment of Foreign Service Officers The FS Retention Survey

2001-06-08 – The Steering Committee of the Comparative Study on the Terms and Conditions of Employment of Foreign Service Officers

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In May we provided you with an update on the Comparative Study on the Terms and Conditions of Employment of Foreign Service Officers. This study is a collaborative effort by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), the Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers (PAFSO), Citizenship and Immigration (CIC) and the Treasury Board Secretariat.

We informed you that William M. Mercer (Toronto) had been hired to conduct a Retention Survey of FS Officers with a view to providing an understanding of the scope of the retention issues at DFAIT and CIC, along with the factors and rationale for separation. The four stakeholders worked together with Mercer to develop a retention survey questionnaire. That questionnaire underwent extensive testing, including with Focus Groups of FS Officers in Ottawa, Beijing, London and Paris. Mercer is now preparing the web-based version of the retention survey and expects to have it operational in about two weeks. At that time we will direct you to the website and provide instructions on completing the survey.

On Friday, June 15, we will send out the Web-based address and a generic password to be used by all FS Officers responding to the FS Retention survey. The online survey will be accessible from Monday, June 18 until Friday, June 29. Since the survey will be hosted on the Internet, you may access it from work or from your home Internet provider. As part of the web-based survey format, Mercer has implemented technical measures to ensure the confidentiality of all responses and to maintain the anonymity of individual FS Officer respondents. These technical measures ensure that individual characteristics cannot be identified in any manner, either during the collection, or the analysis of the data. You will not be asked to sign your name, or to identify your exact assignment at any point during the survey.

We cannot stress too highly the importance of responding to the survey. We have all heard anecdotal evidence about why FS officers choose to leave the Foreign Service. The survey will give us some hard evidence about conditions in the Foreign Service and why some of you may be thinking of leaving. There are no correct answers. We are seeking your candid response to each question.

The survey will be addressed to Foreign Service officers only, including those on Leave Without Pay and on Secondment. We will also ask the 29 FS Officers who left the Foreign Service in the last year to respond to the survey. Mercer will conduct the survey in its entirety and will compile, analyze and present the findings to the four stakeholders. The results of the retention survey will be made available on the HR Website shortly after Mercer provides them to the four stakeholders.

The survey itself is one of a number of components of the work underway on retention in the context of the Comparative Study. The Treasury Board Secretariat is examining the data available from the Public Service