

4. THE CHANGING CONSULAR ENVIRONMENT

4.1 Current Operating Environment

The predominant characteristics of the environment for consular services is the wide variability in the need for assistance, due to the difference in conditions in the very diverse host countries in which Canada maintains missions, as well as the growing demand as more Canadians travel abroad. Consular operations at the mission level have often been adapted in accordance with demand and local conditions, as noted in the Auditor General's Consular Services Audit. The environment for the provision of consular services has changed substantially since the adoption of the Vienna Convention. The major forces dictating these changes are:

1. More Canadians are travelling abroad, both for business and pleasure;
2. More Canadians are living abroad, particularly as a result of the growing population of retired people with a substantial disposable income;
3. The recognition of dual citizenship;
4. The continuing decline in personal security in many parts of the world.

4.2 Changes in Demand

One U.S. mission felt that the Free Trade Agreement would result in an increase in business travellers to their region in the coming years, as well as an increase in the number of part-time Canadian residents. A poor economy in one South American country has resulted in a decrease in tourists headed there, although hours per individual increased for security briefings, etc. Increases in the local population seeking immigration to Canada was also a factor. A Caribbean respondent noted that changes in the passport laws of the host country, requiring 6 months validity for Canadian passports, has resulted in a 10% decline in tourists between '85 and '88. Two missions noted in particular that an increasing number of flights between Canada and the host countries resulted in increases in tourists, travellers, and business people. The prevalent trends are towards increasingly greater numbers of Canadian visitors, in most geographic areas. The two African