

## **INITIAL PREPARATION**

Not all officers will have either the time or the resources to prepare themselves fully prior to departure for Post. It is expected that the initial "self-directed learning" process is a continuum, beginning on notification of the assignment, and stretching into the period after your arrival.

**Have you been in touch with your key Departmental contacts?**

- Geographic director and desk officer?
- Trade policy divisions?
- Head of Mission and your predecessor?
- Other Canada-based staff going to the Post?

**What training have you considered?**

- Foreign language -- full-time or part-time?
- Professional courses: management; human rights; consular; appraisal writing; media training; trade specific (e.g. international trade rules, investment, services, sectoral)

**Have you taken any steps to arrange Temporary Duty (TD) or have you opted to defer it until later in your posting?**

- Have you spoken to APT? Your geographic division? The mission?
- Have you thought about a TD program in Ottawa?
- Are you able to negotiate some time to begin thinking about your program priorities and responsibilities?
- Could you arrange a pre-posting visit in May . . . in time to be involved in the upcoming year's trade planning cycle? (Are you dreaming in Technicolor?)

## **BACK TO REALITY: THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT**

**What is the nature of the market?**

- Have you checked the TID annual plan and Trade Tracking System reports?
- Have you read the standard economic and political reports (i.e. Economist Intelligence Unit reports, regional economic journals)?
- Are there restrictive trade policies or practices, or specific access issues that concern Canadian business? Are they currently under bilateral or multilateral discussion or negotiation?
- What type of firms are attracted to this market (i.e. consultants, services, manufacturers, trading houses)? Are they internationally experienced?
- Are there ethno-cultural business links to Canada or other trading partners?