

DEVELOPING THE PROGRAMME

In order to strengthen the horizontal management capabilities of the Executive Office, particularly in planning and in programme and event management, a **Plans and Programmes** unit should be included within the Executive Office. The senior manager position for Plans and Programmes should be the equivalent to the line directors.

Plans and Programmes works with other directors on the design of the overall programme in response to the requirements of the summit in question and the wishes of the Host. The manager is responsible for the eventual implementation of the Official Programme, overseeing a set of event managers who work in turn on each event together with representatives from the other sections: Logistics, Conference Site and Preparations, Liaison and Coordination, Media, Security, Special Activities and Programmes, and Administration and Finance. The mandate of the **Plans and Programmes** also includes the preparation of detailed event scenarios, in cooperation with each event manager who will be responsible for its implementation.

The Development of the Official Programme:

Ideally, the first draft of a basic Programme should be completed six months prior to the summit. This allows approximately four to eight weeks for any adjustments, refinements, and the final decision-making, and gives the summit organizers at least four months lead-time to put arrangements in place. Until the Official Programme is set, the final selection of events and event sites cannot occur, which in turn makes final decisions on transportation, hospitality, "fit-up" and budget almost an impossibility.

The summit organizers must ensure that the decision-makers at the political level, as well as the substantive planners who often have a prominent role in this process, are constantly aware of the organizational timeframes and constraints attached to the Programme decisions. Earlier Programme decisions inevitably mean better logistical arrangements and facilities.

When submitting the draft Programme it is best to prepare two or three different options, which include optional event sites. It is critical that the options make logistical sense. It is also advantageous to keep the contents and the movements associated with each event as simple and as clean as possible. In all probability, the main elements of the Official Programme option chosen by the Host (ie. the numbers and kinds of meetings, but not the event sites) will have to be approved by other participating governments (or participants).