
and responsive to the needs of its clients. Beginning as a charter operator serving outfitters and mining camps, Air North expanded through the 1980's to become a growing regional carrier servicing Yukon communities as well as destinations in Alaska. The company continues to grow with Boeing 737 service to major gateways in southern Canada including Vancouver, Edmonton and Calgary. This growth was cultivated through a partnership with the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation of Old Crow. In 2002, the Vuntut Development Corporation's position in Air North grew to 48.8% which allowed the airline to expand into a regional jet carrier. Yukon's First Nations are an emerging economic force, and Air North is proud to be a showcase for this kind of partnership. That year the company also took part in a Team Canada mission to Germany and Russia, looking internationally to further business relationships with the two countries and to create opportunities for Air North.

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH ON TRADE POLICY

Openness and transparency are key to an informed dialogue between Canadians and their government. The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade manages a range of permanent and *ad hoc* consultative mechanisms to ensure that the views, priorities and interests of Canadians at large, other levels of government, industry, non-governmental organizations and public interest groups are taken into account in the development of Canada's trade policy agenda.

Parliamentarians are an integral part of these important consultations. By encouraging public awareness and understanding of international trade, as well as citizen participation in public consultations, parliamentarians play a critical role in the development of trade strategies and policies that reflect the priorities and interests of Canadians. The work of parliamentary committees serves as a key instrument in helping parliamentarians increase their knowledge and understanding of Canada's trade strategy, as well as contribute to the development and refinement of this strategy. Government responses to many of the reports, coupled with testimonies and briefings from ministers and senior government officials during

committee hearings, provide another opportunity for the government to keep citizens and parliamentarians fully informed about the strategic orientation and policy direction of Canada's trade agenda.

The Government of Canada uses a variety of mechanisms to maintain a close relationship with the provinces and territories in the area of international trade policy. Government officials meet quarterly, at the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Committee on Trade (C-Trade) meetings, to review the overall trade agenda and emerging trade policy issues, as well as to consult on the formulation of Canada's negotiating positions and strategy. In addition to these regular meetings, the International Trade minister and the deputy minister meet roughly once a year with provincial and territorial counterparts to develop further the cooperative relationship that exists with the provinces and territories in trade and investment policy, to update them on recent trade developments and to discuss trade policy directions, priorities and strategies. With the endorsement of the provinces and territories, the Department has established a joint working group to address the concerns of municipal and community-based interests regarding international trade. The sectoral advisory groups on international trade (SAGITs) are another mechanism that offers sector-specific advice on trade policy issues in an open exchange of ideas and information.

The government is also addressing issues of interest to a broad spectrum of Canadians using multi-stakeholder and sectoral information sessions, as well as roundtable discussions. Reports on many of these sessions are available on the Department's trade negotiations and agreements Web site (www.tradeagreements.gc.ca). Examples of information and consultation sessions that took place during the past year are set out below:

- In February 2003, the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) multi-stakeholder session focused on four issues: investment, services, smaller economies and development, as well as the FTAA and the Summit of the Americas process.
- In May 2003, the multi-stakeholder consultation session reviewed the operation and implementation of Chapter 11 of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This consultation was held