

“The whole ballet of moving people in and moving them around—up to Muskoka for the G-8 and into Toronto for the G-20—is hugely complex,” says Peter McGovern, “but we are fortunate to have so many capable people on board.”

The SMO has drawn DFAIT staff from many areas, including Protocol, geographic divisions, the Afghanistan Task Force and a pool of foreign service officers. Additional staff have come from several other departments, reinforcing the whole-of-government partnership that DFAIT leads internationally and boosting the SMO’s complement to about 100.

A LASTING LEGACY

There will be a swift downward arc from all this work once the G-20 Summit ends on June 27. Removing equipment from the Muskoka and Toronto sites should take only a day or two, but bill payment and auditing will continue for months. The G-20’s attention shifts to the Seoul Summit in November, while Canada continues its work as chair of the G-8 until the end of the year. The SMO will remain in place, with a reduced staff, for summits to come.

For DFAIT staff, memories of the G-8 and G-20 summits will be tinged with satisfaction over their achievements. Summits leave a trail of memories, some humorous. Janet Gompf, a logistics officer in MERGS, recalls a moment following a Cirque du Soleil performance at the 1995 G-7 Halifax Summit, when U.S. Sherpa Don Tarullo told Peter Boehm, then director of DFAIT’s Economic Summit Division, that his contortions to get a final text among the leaders made the Cirque performers seem like amateurs.

The substantive discussions, as well as the proposed new initiatives and the intense networking that take place at the summits, will spawn everything from lasting relationships to new policy, says Len Edwards. “If anything, summitry has increased its usefulness as a diplomatic tool.”

Edwards says that the G-8 and G-20 meetings will be “great showcases for Canada.” The world will see key ideas advanced, important business ties forged, fine cultural performances staged—and a new face of the country in its international year.



photo: Tourism Toronto

2010: The Metro Toronto Convention Centre will host the G-20.

2009 Canada signs free trade agreement with EFTA countries of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland

2009 Canada and EU launch negotiations for Canada-EU comprehensive economic and trade agreement

2009 DFAIT and some 30 organizations and government departments sign Memorandum of Understanding on Operations and Support at Missions Abroad

2010 Meetings of G-8 finance ministers, G-8 foreign affairs ministers, G-8 development ministers

2010 G-8 Summit, Muskoka

2010 G-20 Summit, Toronto

Did you know?



The G-8 logo was inspired by the pine trees painted by the Group of Seven. The eight boughs represent the G-8 nations and suggest strength through unity.



The G-20 logo was inspired by the CN Tower. Its triangular shape represents paths converging toward a shared goal.