

Canadians in a discussion about Canada's role in the world, and to set out before the end of the mandate "a long-term direction on international and defence policy that reflects Canadian values and interests". On January 22, 2003, the Minister of Foreign Affairs launched a nation-wide *Dialogue on Foreign Policy*, which solicits comments from Canadians on a discussion paper that highlights the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century and provides examples of recent Canadian foreign policy initiatives. In terms of North American relations, the paper asks Canadians "How should Canada take advantage of its location in North America to increase prosperity while promoting our distinctive identity?" Over the past months, the Minister has convened town hall meetings across Canada, including in Manitoba, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, and Ontario, to discuss with Canadians their views on Canada's foreign policy. The Minister has undertaken to report back to Canadians on the response generated by the *Dialogue on Foreign Policy* in June.

In the spirit of the Government's commitment of engaging citizens, the Government will continue to encourage and support the ongoing public debate about Canada's relations with its North American Partners. For example, throughout 2003, the Government will be involved in a series of activities such as seminars, roundtables, multi-stakeholder consultations, and other events, to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the NAFTA. One exercise will focus on the environmental effects of the NAFTA and will aim to increase public awareness of the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation. Similar activities are also being planned in the 2003-2004 NAALC program. Each of these events will include participation from different sectors of society as well as opportunities for public input.

Recommendation 5

Given the increasing involvement of non-federal actors in many aspects of North American relations, the Government should consider how best to take into account the interests of other levels of government – on a cooperative basis and through an established process of consultations with provinces, territories, and municipalities – within an evolving Canadian strategic policy framework for advancing these relations.

The Government is firmly committed to working strategically with the provinces, territories and municipalities towards advancing Canada's interests in North America. The Government already enjoys a close working relationship with the provinces and territories through a variety of established mechanisms and is currently seeking ways to build upon this important strategic partnership.