

- 8.1 One proposal made in this context is for a "Centre for Foreign Policy Development" that would identify priorities for analysis and contribute to the public debate.

Response

*The Government agrees that there should be greater dialogue among Canadians about their foreign policy and Canada's international relations in general. The Government has met and will continue to meet its commitment to engage Parliament in debate on major foreign policy issues.*

*The first National Forum on Canada's International Relations, held last March, was another major step in this direction. The Forum is to be an annual event; the next one will be held in the spring in Toronto, on the general theme of reforming international institutions. On the model of its regular consultations with the business community through the International Trade Advisory Committee (ITAC) and Sectoral Advisory Groups on International Trade (SAGIT) processes, and with partners in the NGO-human rights community, the Government will expand and institutionalize this process by establishing active consultations with other groups and individuals interested in the international dimensions of economic relations, development and political affairs*

*The Government also believes that dialogue must be a process that goes on throughout the year across the country. For that reason the Government has decided to create a new mechanism for foreign policy consultations and outreach within the Department of Foreign Affairs. Its function will be to stimulate public consultation and research on foreign policy issues, bringing together government practitioners, experts, Members of Parliament and citizens. In addition, it will ensure that the Government engages Canadians in all aspects of its foreign policy on a systematic basis.*