



have been assigned at headquarters and in the region to work on Brazil-related files. Further, an interdepartmental working group comprising government departments already active in, or with an interest in, Brazil has been functioning very successfully. It is a forum designed to raise awareness of and interest in Brazil and to discuss an overall, strategic approach to this important market.

STRENGTHENING THE OVERALL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE AMERICAS

Recommendation 11

"That the federal government take measures to enhance its existing efforts to raise Canadian business awareness of commercial opportunities in the Americas. Additional funds should be allocated to assist the activities of Canada's foreign diplomatic posts in this area, and greater encouragement and support provided to Chambers of Commerce throughout the Hemisphere."

Assistance to Canadian businesses is provided by 22 Canadian diplomatic offices covering 32 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean through specialized international business development staff, both Canadian and locally engaged. Funding of international business development activities for Latin American and Caribbean posts is currently budgeted at \$22 million annually. Public consultation processes undertaken by the Government in connection with a number of ongoing or potential free trade negotiations involving the Americas (Canada-Central America Four, Canada-Andean Community countries, Canada-Dominican Republic, Canada-CARICOM, Free Trade Area of the Americas) also serve to increase the awareness of the Canadian private sector of opportunities in the region. As part of the outreach program of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), ambassadors, high commissioners and trade promotion officers give regular presentations to the business community throughout Canada on their respective countries of accreditation and on commercial prospects in those countries.

On the question of providing Canadian government representation in Latin America with incremental funding for business development and awareness purposes, a study is to be completed by DFAIT this fiscal year to determine how promotional budgets are best allocated to all geographic regions of the world. This will in part be influenced by the results of a public dialogue with Canadians on the subject of Canada's foreign policy (including trade) priorities, to be carried out later this year.

