

responsibilities, rely largely on informal arrangements. Accordingly, in an effort to consolidate and enhance the Department's role as a central agency, we have sought to augment these arrangements. We have concentrated on four distinct but inseparable areas of international relations activity:

- 1) supporting the Minister in Cabinet and Parliament;
- 2) providing leadership in the interdepartmental community in Ottawa;
- 3) strengthening the Department's organization at headquarters;
- 4) strengthening Canada's posts abroad.

**Supporting
the Minister
in Cabinet and
Parliament**

The Government of Canada is responsible to Parliament which in turn is accountable to the people. The Government decides the way in which it organizes itself to formulate policy; the Department, in turn, must organize itself to serve the needs of the Government. Cabinet is subdivided into a system of committees, each with a specific co-ordinating or operational responsibility. The different Ministers in a committee bring their own perspectives to issues before the committee. Through discussion a consensus is forged and the committee then makes a recommendation to the Cabinet as a whole. Although it is in Cabinet that final decisions are taken, the committees provide the key to understanding the current process of Government policy formulation. The Secretary of State for External Affairs defines and proposes the foreign policy framework within which recommendations of his Cabinet colleagues are considered. Our Minister's responsibility is reflected in his functions within the Cabinet committee system. He chairs the Cabinet Committee on External Affairs and National Defence and participates in the key Committee on Priorities and Planning among others.

The Department must determine how it can improve its support to the Minister and through him, the Prime Minister and the Government. Recent international and domestic developments place greater emphasis on anticipation and timeliness. The Department must be aware of the concerns and objectives of other departments and agencies. I have strongly encouraged members of the Department to expand and strengthen their interdepartmental contacts, especially with other central agencies. The Minister must be kept informed on a continuing basis of issues as they develop. I believe we are getting better, but there is still room for improvement.

**Providing
leadership at
the inter-
departmental
level in
Ottawa**

The Department's central agency responsibility requires it to provide foreign policy leadership at the interdepartmental level in Ottawa. It exercises this responsibility in part through its chairmanship and membership in various interdepartmental committees and agency boards established to maintain and promote coherence in the management of Canada's international relations. I would cite three committees as particularly important.

In recent months, at the request of the Prime Minister, a Committee of Deputy Ministers on Foreign Policy has been formed under my chairmanship. It addresses