

Consultations: A Summary

The Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of International Trade acknowledge the importance of consulting with interested stakeholders on significant plans and programs. Initiatives were therefore undertaken to include the perspective of other departments and agencies, the provinces and territories, Aboriginal groups, academia, business, non-governmental organizations and individuals in the development of *Agenda 2006*.

The internal consultation process began when a plan for the development of the strategy was presented to the DFAIT Executive Committee in January 2003. This was followed by a workshop in February 2003 with 32 participants representative of the various sectors within the Department in attendance. The program entailed an assessment of *Agenda 2003*, an issue scan, and recommendations for Departmental priorities. The results of this workshop were reviewed by the DFAIT Sustainable Development Task Force but not made public in any way.

A 3/4 day workshop with 18 outside stakeholders was held in Ottawa in April 2003. Many of the organizations represented that day were the same as those that had consulted on the previous strategy. The SD knowledge base was impressive as was the SD progress being made by the various organizations represented at the workshop. The recommendations made by this group were, interestingly enough, very similar to those made by the internal participants.

Based on the recommendations of the two groups, goal-specific discussions at SD Task Force meetings, and many one-on-one meetings with individuals in specific sectors, a draft

strategy was completed. After full circulation within the Department, the draft strategy went to Executive Committee for approval in late July 2003 and was posted on the Department's website for consultation purposes in August and September. Six hundred and sixty-one stakeholders were invited by e-mail and letter to provide comments on the draft in addition to those people who had participated in the issue scan phase.

Based on the comments received from the public consultation and internal discussions, a second draft strategy was completed. Upon full internal circulation and the resultant revisions, it was sent for Ministerial approval in October.

Consultations with other government departments were ongoing. Besides consultations related to the common look and feel, and the use of consistent language on Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development in Government Operations initiatives, the Department discussed other areas of commonality at consultations sessions held at Industry Canada and the Department of Finance.

As a result of the consultations outlined above, the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of International Trade are confident that *Agenda 2006* incorporates the interests of a broad range of organizations and individuals, both from the public and private sectors. Both Departments are grateful to all those groups and individuals who made the time to be a part of the development process. *Agenda 2006* is a more strategic document because of their interest.