



communiqué

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SPOUSAL EMPLOYMENT POLICY AT HEADQUARTERS

The Right Honourable Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs, today released the text of a letter he has sent to Mrs. Shirley Hadwen, President of the Foreign Service Community Association, concerning the application of the Department's Spousal Employment Policy at headquarters.

"Thank you for your letter of September 19 in which you express concern about the application of the Department's Spousal Employment Policy at headquarters.

"As you know, questions had been raised over whether the policy was being implemented so as to give spouses an unfair advantage in obtaining contract opportunities, and I thought it in the interest of all concerned to carry out a review of this aspect of the policy. As part of this review, I had what I found to be a most useful meeting with you and other members of your Executive.

"I am pleased to be able to tell you that the review is now complete and I am satisfied not only that the Spousal Employment Policy is sound but that adequate administrative procedures are in place to ensure that there is neither the appearance nor the substance of preferential treatment. Accordingly,

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spouses may now compete again for Departmental contracts at headquarters for which they are qualified.

"Finally, I might add in closing that I believe the Spousal Employment Policy to be a fair and realistic Departmental response to some of the problems in foreign service life identified by the McDougall Commission."

Explanatory Note

The administrative procedures in place in the Department referred to by the Right Honourable Joe Clark, are intended to ensure equity, obtain value for money, comply with Central Agencies' requirements and authorities and avoid any conflict of interest in the granting of contracts. Except as indicated, they apply to all contracts whether with spouses or not.

- A Contract Review Board comprising representatives of the Corporate Management Bureau, Personnel Branch, Finance and Management Services Bureau, and Domestic Legal Services reviews all proposed contracts to ensure that they are in full conformity with the Departmental and Central Agencies' directives and guidelines. The Board is assisted by a Contracts Advisor.
- The Board is empowered to approve or reject a proposed contract.
- Proposed contracts are submitted with a managerial checklist certifying compliance with the applicable directives and guidelines together with additional information as required by the Board or the Contracts Advisor.
- Any proposed contract with a spouse must be so identified explicitly in the managerial checklist.

- Any proposed contract involving a spouse is reviewed by the Board to ensure that the opportunity to compete was given to others, that there is no conflict of interest and that the staff member whose spouse has been considered for the contract was not involved in any way in the contracting process.

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