



— **MORE THAN A VOCATION** —
**CANADA'S NEED FOR A 21ST CENTURY
FOREIGN SERVICE**

Report of the Senate Standing Committee
on Foreign Affairs and International Trade

The Honourable Peter M. Boehm, Chair
The Honourable Peter Harder, P.C., Deputy Chair



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Orders of Reference

Extract from the *Journals of the Senate* of Thursday, May 4, 2023:

The Honourable Senator Boehm moved, seconded by the Honourable Senator Cormier:

That, notwithstanding the order of the Senate adopted on Tuesday, February 7, 2023, the date for the final report of the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade in relation to its study on the Canadian foreign service and elements of the foreign policy machinery within Global Affairs Canada be extended from September 29, 2023 to December 29, 2023.

The question being put on the motion, it was adopted.

Interim Clerk of the Senate

Gérald Lafrenière

Extract from the *Journals of the Senate* of Tuesday, February 7, 2023:

The Honourable Senator Boehm moved, seconded by the Honourable Senator Forest:

That, notwithstanding the order of the Senate adopted on Thursday, February 24, 2022, the date for the final report of the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade in relation to its study on the Canadian foreign service and elements of the foreign policy machinery within Global Affairs Canada be extended from March 30, 2023, to September 29, 2023.

The question being put on the motion, it was adopted.

Interim Clerk of the Senate

Gérald Lafrenière

Extract from the *Journals of the Senate* of Thursday, February 24, 2022:

The Honourable Senator Boehm moved, seconded by the Honourable Senator LaBoucane-Benson:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade be authorized to examine and report on the Canadian foreign service and elements of the foreign policy machinery within Global Affairs Canada, and on other related matters; and

That the committee submit its final report no later than March 30, 2023, and that it retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings for 180 days after the tabling of the final report.

The question being put on the motion, it was adopted.

Interim Clerk of the Senate

Gérald Lafrenière

The Committee Membership



The Honourable
Peter M. Boehm
Chair



The Honourable
Peter Harder, P.C.
Deputy Chair

The Honourable Senators



Gwen Boniface



Mary Coyle



Marty Deacon



Amina Gerba



Stephen Greene



Leo Housakos



Michael L. MacDonald



Mohamed-Iqbal
Ravalia



David Richards



Yuen Pau Woo

Ex-officio members of the committee:

The Honourable Senator Marc Gold, P.C., or Patti LaBoucane-Benson
The Honourable Senator Donald Plett or Yonah Martin

Other Senators who have participated in the study:

The Honourable Senator Ataullahjan
The Honourable Senator Boisvenu
The Honourable Senator Busson
The Honourable Senator Cardozo
The Honourable Senator Cordy
The Honourable Senator Manning
The Honourable Senator Marwah (resigned)
The Honourable Senator Mégie
The Honourable Senator Moncion
The Honourable Senator Oh
The Honourable Senator Omidvar
The Honourable Senator Patterson (Ontario)

Parliamentary Information, Education and Research Services, Library of Parliament:

Nadia Faucher, Analyst
Brian Hermon, Analyst

Senate Committees Directorate:

Chantal Cardinal, Procedural Clerk
Gaëtane Lemay, Procedural Clerk (retired)
Louise Martel, Administrative Assistant
Marc-André Lanthier, Administrative Assistant

Senate Communications Directorate:

Amely Coulombe, Communications Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Are Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and the Canadian foreign service fit for purpose? This is the question that prompted the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade (the committee) to conduct the first substantive examination of the Canadian foreign service in more than 40 years. The global environment has changed dramatically since 1981 when the Royal Commission on Conditions of Foreign Service published its report, not least because of globalization, new geopolitical alignments, and technological advancements.

This changing global environment has led a growing list of countries to reassess the work and capacities of their foreign services and foreign ministries. These countries include the United States, the United Kingdom, Norway, and Germany – all of which have conducted, or are in the process of performing, diplomatic modernization exercises. The committee visited these four countries during its study to gain a comparative perspective on the foreign services and foreign ministries of Canadian partner countries. The experiences of these countries are particularly relevant to GAC as it undertakes its own multi-year organizational transformation aimed at strengthening Canada's diplomatic capacities.

Drawing on witness testimony and lessons learned during its fact-finding missions, this report offers 29 recommendations for modernizing Canadian diplomacy. The committee's recommendations span areas that include organizational structure and coherence, recruitment, career management, and conditions of foreign service. Specifically, the committee recommends that GAC run an annual entry-level foreign service officer recruitment campaign to fill all foreign service vacancies and better enable the deployment of surge resources in emergency situations. It also recommends that GAC establish a training roadmap for all Canada-based staff as part of a career management framework and increase its investment in official-language and foreign-language training.

On conditions of foreign service, the committee recommends that the Government of Canada undertake a complete modernization of the Foreign Service Directives to ensure they align with the current and evolving realities faced by Canada's public servants and their families. It further recommends that GAC dedicate additional human and financial resources to better support families posted abroad, including by identifying ways to facilitate employment of any accompanying spouse or partner. Other committee recommendations include that GAC encourage the horizontal movement of employees in and out of the department; consider how separate agency status could allow GAC to improve its human resources regime; and empower Canada's locally engaged staff with more leadership opportunities. Finally, the committee recommends the establishment of an advisory group to support the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report.

Fundamentally, the committee's study emphasized that diplomacy and the work of Canada's diplomatic and foreign service professionals are essential to advancing Canada's domestic and

global interests. From managing Canada's diplomatic and trade relations, to responding to consular and humanitarian emergencies, GAC personnel represent and advance Canada's interests abroad with distinction. However, a lack of recruitment and investment in Canada's diplomatic capacities and capabilities over much of the past two decades has undermined Canada's ability to influence and shape global issues and effect change. The committee believes that the Government of Canada needs to reinvest in Canadian diplomacy to ensure that GAC and the Canadian foreign service are fit for purpose and prepared to meet the complex global challenges of the decades to come.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

Global Affairs Canada should greatly enhance its domestic public outreach and education efforts, including by fostering relationships between the Canadian foreign service and Canadian educational institutions.

Recommendation 2

Global Affairs Canada should strengthen policy coherence and break silos between trade, diplomacy and development cooperation.

Recommendation 3

Global Affairs Canada should better reflect emerging trends in the field of development cooperation in training modules offered by the Canadian Foreign Service Institute. Training should include a greater focus on planning and project management in development cooperation.

Recommendation 4

Global Affairs Canada should encourage all foreign service officers and non-rotational staff, regardless of their area of expertise, to strengthen their knowledge of development cooperation policy and its application.

Recommendation 5

Global Affairs Canada should evaluate options to allow foreign service officers in the international assistance stream and development cooperation specialists to seek postings outside of developing countries.

Recommendation 6

In foreign policy files involving multiple federal departments and agencies, the Government of Canada should clearly identify the role of each party, including the department or agency taking the coordinating or lead policy role. The Government of Canada should also identify the role that Canada's missions abroad can play in advancing key foreign, trade and international development policy files.

Recommendation 7

Global Affairs Canada should examine its current senior management structure and evaluate options for reducing the number of senior officials with the objective of reallocating resources made available by that process. It should also explore ways to empower mid-level management by delegating more authority to directors general and other executives.

Recommendation 8

The Government of Canada should ensure that Global Affairs Canada's senior officials, including deputy ministers, have in-depth knowledge of and experience in international affairs.

Recommendation 9

Global Affairs Canada should run an annual entry-level foreign service officer recruitment campaign with the aim of filling all vacancies in the Canadian foreign service and creating a redundancy that would enable Global Affairs Canada to deploy surge resources faster and more adeptly in emergency situations. The department should also ensure that recruitment processes, including the steps and expected timeframe for each step, are communicated clearly to applicants.

Recommendation 10

Global Affairs Canada should strive to build a workforce that is representative of the diversity of Canadian society. It should identify and address barriers faced by minority groups in the department, including Black and Asian Canadians and Indigenous peoples. It should also review and accelerate the implementation of its Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategies, plans and policies, including policies aimed at supporting the career advancement of traditionally underrepresented groups in the department and the Canadian foreign service.

Recommendation 11

Global Affairs Canada should evaluate options for replacing the public service entrance exam as the mechanism for testing applicants to the Canadian foreign service with other tests and processes that better assess the skills and competencies required by Canadian foreign service officers.

Recommendation 12

Global Affairs Canada should recruit more mid-career professionals from other government departments, as well as from outside of government, including the private sector, civil society organizations, educational institutions and think tanks.

Recommendation 13

Global Affairs Canada should establish a training roadmap for all Canada-based staff as part of a career management framework that includes access to a range of functional, geographic and practical skill-based training courses at the Canadian Foreign Service Institute.

Recommendation 14

Global Affairs Canada should establish a pathway in the Canadian foreign service for specialists who would be expected to maintain, with the support of relevant training, specific geographic, functional and/or linguistic expertise and competencies over the course of their career.

Recommendation 15

Global Affairs Canada should play a more active role in conflict mediation and resolution and should underwrite that capability with relevant employee training and career management support.

Recommendation 16

Global Affairs Canada should maintain a Legal Affairs Bureau and a Legal Advisor at the Assistant Deputy Minister level within the department.

Recommendation 17

Global Affairs Canada should promote the equal use of French and English within the department, ensure that *ab initio* official language training is maintained, and expand official language training opportunities to all other employees, including both Canada-based staff and locally engaged staff.

Recommendation 18

Global Affairs Canada should increase its investment in foreign-language training and should provide regular opportunities for Canada-based staff that have been trained in a foreign language to maintain that linguistic expertise over their career.

Recommendation 19

Global Affairs Canada should ensure that all new employees have formalized access to a mentor, and the department should establish mentorship and job shadowing opportunities that all employees can access throughout their careers.

Recommendation 20

The Clerk of the Privy Council should issue a directive to Deputy Ministers, Heads of Separate Agencies, and Heads of Federal Agencies calling on them to encourage Canadian federal public servants to pursue secondments, interchanges and other forms of temporary assignments in and out of the federal public service, including, as appropriate, with other government departments and agencies, private sector companies, multilateral bodies, educational institutions and civil society organizations.

Recommendation 21

As part of its career management framework, senior management at Global Affairs Canada should emphasize that horizontal movement by employees in and out of the department is valued and recognized with regard to career progression, including promotions and postings abroad.

Recommendation 22

Global Affairs Canada should recognize the value and contributions of locally engaged staff to the work of the department by providing them with greater training, interchange and leadership opportunities as well as ways of contributing to the work of the wider department.

Recommendation 23

The Government of Canada should undertake a complete modernization of the Foreign Service Directives to ensure that they are adapted to the current and evolving realities faced by Canada's public servants and their families, including with regard to issues related to diversity, inclusion and accessibility. In particular, the Foreign Service Directives should recognize the diversity of family composition, including the realities of single and/or unaccompanied individuals. The modernization of the Foreign Service Directives should also aim to simplify administrative procedures and remove excessive administrative requirements.

Recommendation 24

Global Affairs Canada should dedicate additional human and financial resources to improve ongoing support to personnel posted abroad, including by identifying ways to facilitate employment of any accompanying spouse or partner.

Recommendation 25

The Government of Canada should review the Foreign Service Directives to ensure that they reflect the realities of personnel and family members living with a disability or special needs. It should also reduce the administrative burden imposed on personnel seeking accommodation from Working Group B with regard to a disability or a special needs case.

Recommendation 26

Global Affairs Canada should establish a pathway for integrating non-rotational Canada-based staff into the Canadian foreign service, and the department should improve the process for non-rotational subject-matter experts to apply for overseas postings.

Recommendation 27

The Government of Canada should examine the possibility of seeking separate agency status for Global Affairs Canada. This examination should consider how separate agency status could allow Global Affairs Canada to restructure the department and redesign its human resource regime while also maintaining a capacity for interdepartmental mobility. It should also include an evaluation of lessons learned from the creation of separate agencies within the Government of Canada.

Recommendation 28

The Government of Canada should affirm Global Affairs Canada as a central agency with responsibility for coordinating Canada's approach to international policy files across the federal government.

Recommendation 29

Global Affairs Canada should establish an advisory group to assist with the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report. The advisory group should include internal and external representatives, including current and former Global Affairs Canada employees, as well as parliamentarians, academics, and civil society representatives.

Introduction

Are Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and the Canadian foreign service fit for purpose? This was the question at the heart of the study on the Canadian foreign service and elements of the foreign policy machinery within GAC undertaken by the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade (the committee).¹ Prior to the initiation of the committee's study in February 2022, there had been no substantive examination of the Canadian foreign service in the more than 40 years since former Canadian diplomat Pamela McDougall led a Royal Commission tasked with examining conditions of foreign service. In the committee's view, a new study was long overdue, not least due to how the world has changed since Ms. McDougall delivered her report in 1981.

During a May 30, 2022 town hall with GAC staff, the Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs, announced that GAC would undertake a review of Canada's diplomatic capabilities. Following more than a year of consultation and examination, in June 2023, GAC released the results of its review in a discussion paper entitled *Future of Diplomacy: Transforming Global Affairs Canada*.² That paper indicated that GAC needed to adapt to the challenges of the coming decades by revitalizing Canada's diplomatic capacities. The paper prescribed four areas where the department would focus its efforts: building new policy expertise, increasing Canada's presence abroad, investing in its staff, and modernizing its tools, processes and departmental culture. In September 2023, GAC released its *Transformation Implementation Plan* – a roadmap containing key actions and deliverables designed to implement the future of diplomacy initiative over the 2023–2026 period.³

The committee's study and GAC's internal review identified many similar issues of concern. At the same time, the scope of the committee's study and the process by which it gathered evidence differed from GAC's review, thus allowing for different perspectives and issues to come to light. The committee's report outlines several shared findings and priority areas of reform, while also providing additional recommendations and advice to GAC as it embarks on the implementation phase of the future of diplomacy initiative.

Over the course of its study, the committee heard approximately 22 hours of testimony from expert witnesses, including former Canadian diplomats, policy experts and researchers, and members of four GAC employee-led networks. Representatives of 10 federal government departments and agencies, including GAC's three ministers and key senior officials, also

¹ Senate, *Journals*, February 24, 2022.

² Global Affairs Canada (GAC), *Future of Diplomacy: Transforming Global Affairs Canada*, Discussion Paper, June 2023.

³ At the time of drafting, GAC's *Transformation Implementation Plan 2023-2026* had not been made public. However, Antoine Chevrier, GAC's Chief Transformation Officer, posted the plan's main deliverables to the social media site X (formerly known as Twitter). See: Antoine Chevrier (@ChevrierAntoine), "[Any #transformation effort needs to start at the foundations...](#)" X, September 18, 2023, 10:56AM; "[The success of @GAC Corporate #transformation will fully depend on ...](#)," X, September 19, 2023, 9:14AM; "[Reducing workload and bureaucratic burden...](#)," X, September 20, 2023, 1:30PM; "[Open by default and increased collaboration ...](#)," X, September 21, 2023, 9:46AM; "[And finally, the @GAC Corporate @transformation plan ...](#)," X, September 22, 2023, 8:54 AM.

testified before the committee. In addition, the committee's study benefited greatly from the testimony of three distinguished former Canadian foreign ministers: the Right Honourable Joe Clark, P.C. (also a former prime minister of Canada), the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, P.C., and the Honourable John Baird, P.C.⁴ The committee also had an opportunity to visit GAC's headquarters in Ottawa for informal briefings with senior management.

To gain a comparative perspective on the foreign services of Canadian partner countries, the committee conducted fact-finding missions to Washington, D.C., United States (U.S.), London, United Kingdom (U.K.), Oslo, Norway, and Berlin, Germany. Through meetings with government officials, elected representatives and policy experts, these visits allowed the committee to learn from four countries with similar systems of government to Canada's that have conducted, or are in the process of performing, reviews of their foreign services or foreign ministries. In each location, the committee also had occasion to meet with a cross-section of GAC staff.

GAC staff comprises two broad groups of employees: Canada-based staff (CBS), who are Canadian civil servants and work either in Canada or at Canadian missions abroad, and locally engaged staff (LES), who are normally foreign citizens hired in their own countries to provide support at Canadian missions abroad. CBS can be further categorized as belonging to one of two groups: rotational and non-rotational employees. Foreign service officers are rotational employees, meaning that they accept terms and conditions of service that allow their employer to deploy them abroad, or assign them to postings at headquarters, based on operational needs. The foreign service officers employed by GAC work in various thematic streams, including in the areas of political relations, trade, international assistance, and management and consular relations. The immigration stream of the Canadian foreign service is managed by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

While the Canadian foreign service was the focus of the committee's work, the study was not limited to consideration of this employee group alone. The committee also examined how non-rotational CBS, who are sometimes posted abroad, and LES, interact with the foreign service. It also looked at how the work and mandates of other government departments and agencies with international programs and interests intersect with GAC and the Canadian foreign service. Unless otherwise specified, the use of the term "GAC employee" in this report is a reference to all departmental staff, including Canadian foreign service officers, non-rotational CBS, and LES.

Part one of this report situates the committee's study within a broader national and international context. It begins with background on the McDougall Commission's 1981 report, before looking at how new global challenges are affecting the work and needs of foreign ministries around the world. This part of the report also highlights the experiences of other

⁴ The full list of witnesses who appeared during this study is available in Appendix B, as well as on the committee's [website](#). To consult the briefs received by the committee during this study, see: Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade (AEFA), *Briefs and Other Documents*.

countries that have engaged in reviews of their foreign services and foreign ministries. The second part of the report provides an overview of Canada's foreign service and foreign policy machinery. This section describes the human resource structure of the foreign service, discusses the interdepartmental coordination involved in supporting Canada's international engagement, and reflects on the amalgamation of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT).

The final part of the report discusses the various reforms the committee believes are needed to revitalize and modernize the Canadian foreign service and the foreign policy machinery within GAC. Among other points, this part of the report looks at GAC's management structure and organizational culture, as well as issues related to recruitment, career management, and fostering expertise. This part of the report also examines the conditions of foreign service, including issues involving the Foreign Service Directives and the department's duty of care to its employees, as well as the subject of Canada's diplomatic presence abroad.

Part 1: National and Global Context

The McDougall Commission and Beyond

As noted above, prior to the initiation of the committee's study, the last major review of the Canadian foreign service took place more than 40 years ago. In 1980, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau asked Pamela McDougall, a former Canadian ambassador and deputy minister, to lead a Royal Commission looking at the conditions of foreign service. Ms. McDougall delivered her report in late 1981, after more than a year of study, during which time she and her team travelled more than 120,000 km, visited 40% of Canada's foreign missions and interviewed over 60% of the employees and spouses serving abroad.⁵

Ms. McDougall's report found that there was a "profound malaise" in the foreign service, one that "if not met by decisive and early action may put in serious question the viability of the career rotational foreign service as we know it today."⁶ The report contained more than 60 recommendations, which focused largely on issues surrounding spouses and families, human resources, benefits and compensation, and the legal and administrative management of the foreign service.

The government tabled its response to the report in 1983 and accepted many of the commission's recommendations, including ones aimed at eliminating distinctions between the different categories of foreign service employees, enhancing the personal safety of foreign service employees and their families, and improving the language training options within the

⁵ *Royal Commission on Conditions of Foreign Service*, Library and Archives Canada, 1981, p. 2.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

department.⁷ The government also accepted the commission's recommendation to incorporate the Trade Commissioner Service into the department – a process that was already underway as Ms. McDougall was conducting her study. It also announced amendments to the Foreign Service Directives to remove “inequities” that had earlier applied to the systems of benefits and compensation for members of the foreign service. Among these amendments were increases to the premium paid to employees serving in difficult posts and changes to allow for more flexible use of travel entitlements.⁸

Assessments regarding the long-term impact of the Royal Commission's report on the department are mixed.⁹ During its hearings, the committee heard that many of the same issues that Ms. McDougall highlighted in her report continue to concern GAC employees today, including elements related to the conditions of foreign service.

Witnesses also highlighted some of the challenges and gaps that have hindered the department for decades, including with respect to funding and sustained leadership. The Canadian Foreign Service Alumni Forum, a group composed of retired Canadian foreign service officers, identified in a brief submitted to the committee that some of the difficulties faced by GAC are the result of the “resource squeeze” the department has faced over the past two to three decades. According to the Forum, “[r]eductions were made to both departmental programs and to personnel resources” at the same time as “GAC was forced to expand its scope and geographic reach.”¹⁰ As shown in Appendix A, GAC's expenditure has increased in recent years, but the largest share of the funding increases over the last five fiscal years was allocated to Development, Peace and Security programming. Appendix A also illustrates that a large proportion – about 15% – of GAC full-time equivalents are allocated to internal services. Additionally, in its June 2023 discussion paper, GAC notes that Canada's per capita spending on the foreign ministry is lower than that of Germany, the U.K. and Australia.¹¹ In addition to funding challenges, witnesses noted gaps created by a “revolving door” of foreign ministers. According to Adam Chapnick, Professor of Defence Studies, Canadian Forces College, the rotation of foreign ministers in the past 15 years has meant that “[n]one of Canada's 11 foreign ministers who have served in the position over the last 15 years have had either the power or the time in the portfolio necessary to provide Canada and its diplomats with real leadership.”¹²

⁷ Government of Canada, *Response of the Government of Canada to the Report of the Royal Commission on Conditions of Foreign Service*, May 1983.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ For example, according to an analysis by historians Greg Donaghy, Mary Halloran, and John Hilliker, the Royal Commission “did not lead to fundamental change in the conditions of foreign service, nor did it put an end to perennial complaints among foreign service employees and their families.” At the same time, Mr. Donaghy, Ms. Halloran, and Mr. Hilliker added that “in modest ways the department did adopt some of its practical recommendations to ease the burden on foreign service families and increase the incentive to serve abroad and tried to address weaknesses in administrative practices.” See: Greg Donaghy, Mary Halloran, and John Hilliker, *Canada's Department of External Affairs, Volume III: Innovation and Adaptation, 1969–1984*, University of Toronto Press, 2017, p. 357.

¹⁰ Canadian Foreign Service Alumni Forum, *Brief* submitted to the committee, November 17, 2022.

¹¹ GAC, *Future of Diplomacy: Transforming Global Affairs Canada*, Discussion Paper, June 2023.

¹² AEFA, *Evidence*, October 20, 2022 (Adam Chapnick).

At the same time, many witnesses underscored how much diplomatic work and the challenges faced by GAC employees have evolved over the past number of years due to the impact of technology, globalization and other factors. The following section discusses the need for diplomatic modernization in the face of new global challenges.

Modern Diplomacy in a Changing World

When Minister Joly announced the launch of GAC's future of diplomacy initiative in May 2022, Canada joined a growing list of countries that have conducted or are in the process of performing reviews of their foreign services or foreign ministries. This list includes the four countries the committee visited during its study – the U.S., the U.K., Norway, and Germany (discussed below). Why have Canada and several other countries recently undertaken diplomatic reviews and foreign ministry modernization processes? What is it about the current geopolitical environment that has necessitated a rethink of the work of foreign ministries and foreign services, and how are technological advancements and challenges driving the need for diplomatic modernization? These questions were central to the committee's study.

In her remarks announcing the review, Minister Joly spoke about some of the current global challenges facing Canada and the international community, stating: "Power is more [diffuse]. We are no longer living in a unipolar world. Old alliances are being tested, and new alliances are coming to form. And most importantly, huge international crises that used to be truly the exception are now becoming the norm."¹³ Minister Joly said that GAC needs to take an "honest look in the mirror" to ensure that Canada is ready and capable of meeting these 21st century challenges.

The committee heard similar messages over the course of its study. For example, the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, referred to the current moment in international affairs as a "crossroads," which he said will require a "redesign — a vision, and an architecture — at Global Affairs Canada to be able to respond to it."¹⁴ Margaret Biggs, former President of CIDA and Matthews Fellow in Global Public Policy, Queen's University, told the committee that Canada faces an increasingly uncertain and "potentially hostile operating environment." In addition to the regional and global instability caused by the war in Ukraine, Ms. Biggs said that the geopolitical context has been affected by several "disrupters," such as climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, cyber threats, and the erosion of democracy globally. She stated: "All of these [challenges] transcend borders. All of them impact our vital interests and values. None of them are discretionary."¹⁵ According to Ms. Biggs, any assessment of whether GAC is fit for purpose should be anchored in an understanding of these new international realities.

¹³ Neil Moss, "['Diplomacy is all about being there': former diplomats call for reassessment of foreign service global presence during GAC review](#)," *The Hill Times*, June 8, 2022.

¹⁴ AEFA, [Evidence](#), April 20, 2023 (Hon. Lloyd Axworthy).

¹⁵ AEFA, [Evidence](#), April 7, 2022 (Margaret Biggs).

Len Edwards, a former Deputy Minister of International Trade and Foreign Affairs, echoed these comments, noting that the world has become increasingly complex, unstable and unpredictable over the past thirty years. According to Mr. Edwards, “[e]very domain of foreign activity has become more demanding: political relationships, diplomacy, maintenance of peace and stability, functioning of the multilateral system, economic and trade relations, assisting businesses abroad, promoting development and protecting Canadians working and travelling outside Canada.”¹⁶ To meet such challenges, Mr. Edwards said, “Canada needs a multidisciplinary foreign service of the highest quality to advise and inform governments in decision-making and to deliver the best results.” For his part, the late Ian Shugart, a former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and a former Clerk of the Privy Council, noted that the current pace of global change, influenced by advanced technologies, emerging security threats, and new foreign policy actors, requires a foreign service that is responsive and adaptive.¹⁷

Why the Foreign Service Matters

A key message highlighted throughout the committee’s study is that diplomacy and the work of foreign service and foreign ministry professionals matter. Indeed, this was a guiding principle in conceptualizing the committee’s study. Colin Robertson, Vice-President and Fellow, Canadian Global Affairs Institute, told the committee that, in an “increasingly messy and mean” world, diplomacy remains our “first line of defence” and a more cost-effective option than armed force. According to Mr. Robertson, effective diplomats have an ability to “go beyond the headlines to see what is coming over the horizon and focus on the underlying trends and the bigger picture.”¹⁸ Similarly, Margaret Biggs told the committee, “there are no military solutions” for most of the world’s contemporary challenges – whether they are pandemics, humanitarian and refugee crises, cyber risks, or threats to human rights and democratic freedoms.¹⁹ More than ever, she said, Canada needs to invest in its diplomatic corps and foreign policy capabilities and instruments.

While critically important, the work that GAC and foreign service employees do to support Canada’s interests at home and abroad can at times seem remote and abstract. However, throughout its study, the committee heard many examples of how this work impacts Canadians at a very practical level. This includes, for example, the support that trade commissioners provide to Canadian businesses, and the work that those in the immigration stream of the foreign service do to reunite families, assist people fleeing war and persecution and bring in skilled workers to Canada. It also includes the efforts of Canadian diplomats who

¹⁶ AEFA, *Evidence*, April 28, 2022 (Len Edwards).

¹⁷ Ian Shugart was appointed to the Senate of Canada in September 2022. A dedicated Canadian public servant, Mr. Shugart passed away on October 25, 2023. AEFA, *Evidence*, June 16, 2022 (Ian Shugart).

¹⁸ AEFA, *Evidence*, June 16, 2022 (Colin Robertson).

¹⁹ AEFA, *Evidence*, April 7, 2022 (Margaret Biggs).

represent and advocate for Canada's national interests in multilateral organizations, where many international treaties are negotiated.

One of the most direct ways in which Canadians come into contact with GAC employees is when they face an emergency situation overseas. GAC provides consular assistance – help, support and advice to Canadians abroad – through 260 points of service in 150 countries. The COVID-19 pandemic tested GAC and Canada's consular program in unprecedented ways. Between March and July 2020, GAC led the largest repatriation operation in Canadian history, helping some 62,000 people return to Canada during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic.²⁰ Marta Morgan, then Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, told the committee that approximately one in five GAC employees at headquarters were involved in repatriation efforts during this operation.²¹

The committee was told that the Government of Canada needs to more clearly articulate why diplomacy and the work of GAC matter to Canadians. In this regard, Pierre Guimond, Senior Fellow, Graduate School of International Studies, Laval University, said the government should improve the way it communicates to the public about Canada's international priorities and activities. He recommended GAC increase its presence on university campuses, both to promote careers in the department and to inform the public about Canadian foreign policy. He further encouraged Canadian ambassadors to travel across Canada to “share their experiences, thus urging all Canadians to become interested and involved in foreign policy.”²²

Greater efforts by GAC to engage with the Canadian public are also important to dispel outdated perceptions about the nature of diplomatic work and those who perform it. As the committee saw first-hand during its fact-finding missions, the individuals who serve Canada in a diplomatic capacity represent a diversity of backgrounds and embody a deep commitment to public service and to Canada. The committee believes that GAC should actively promote efforts that contribute to a better public understanding about the work of the department and the Canadian foreign service.

Recommendation 1

Global Affairs Canada should greatly enhance its domestic public outreach and education efforts, including by fostering relationships between the Canadian foreign service and Canadian educational institutions.

Diplomatic Modernization in Likeminded Countries

The committee conducted two fact-finding missions during its study. The first was to Washington, D.C., U.S., in December 2022, and the second was to London, U.K., Oslo, Norway,

²⁰ GAC, *An outstanding repatriation effort*.

²¹ AEFA, *Evidence*, June 9, 2022 (Marta Morgan).

²² AEFA, *Evidence*, April 7, 2022 (Pierre Guimond).

and Berlin, Germany, in September 2023. The visits to these countries offered an opportunity to hear about four unique foreign ministry and foreign service restructuring and modernization processes at different stages of development. Below is an overview of these processes and the committee's findings.

United States

In an October 2021 speech at the U.S. Foreign Service Institute, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced the launch of a modernization of American diplomacy initiative. The initiative is organized around five pillars: 1) strengthening policy capacity and expertise; 2) elevating new voices and encouraging communication and innovation; 3) building and retaining a dynamic and diverse workforce; 4) modernizing technological, communication and analytical capabilities; and 5) reinvigorating in-person diplomacy and public engagement. In his speech, Secretary Blinken said the reforms were “about making sure that our work, our resources, our priorities are all aligned with what’s happening in the world, that we’re dealing effectively with the most significant challenges before us and meeting the needs and aspirations of the people that we serve.”²³

The U.S. State Department has announced a number of specific proposals and action items under each pillar of its diplomatic modernization initiative. For example, under the first pillar on policy capacity and expertise, the State Department has created new foreign service officer positions focused on climate issues in its regional bureaus, as well as in selected missions abroad, including India and Brazil. In addition, in September 2022, as part of the initiative’s third pillar on building a dynamic and diverse workforce, the State Department released a five-year plan on diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility.²⁴ The implementation of that plan – which includes a commitment to promoting the recruitment of underrepresented groups and addressing barriers to entry for diverse candidates – is being led by the State Department’s Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, a position established by Secretary Blinken in April 2021.

During its fact-finding mission to Washington, D.C., the committee met various stakeholders, including members of the U.S. Congress and State Department officials, to learn about the implementation of the diplomatic modernization agenda. For instance, the committee was informed that the State Department has conducted a review exercise to identify the thematic expertise on issues such as climate change and cybersecurity that exists in the department. The committee also heard about efforts by the U.S. Congress to secure further funds for the diplomatic modernization agenda.

²³ United States (U.S). Department of State, [*Secretary Antony J. Blinken on the Modernization of American Diplomacy*](#), Remarks, October 27, 2021.

²⁴ U.S., Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson, [*Announcement of the Finalization of the State Department’s Five-year Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility \(DEIA\) Strategic Plan*](#), Fact sheet, September 13, 2022.

United Kingdom

Over the past decade, the U.K. has undertaken several initiatives to restructure and reform its foreign ministry. For instance, in 2016, the U.K. launched a four-year Diplomacy 20:20 initiative aimed at delivering a more expert and agile foreign ministry (then known as the Foreign and Commonwealth Office or FCO) supported by “a world-class platform.” According to the FCO, among other benefits, the initiative allowed more staff to gain external experience through secondments; enabled U.K.-based staff at headquarters and in some overseas missions to serve longer assignments as a way of enhancing policymaking, operational delivery and institutional memory; and permitted staff, including heads of missions, to obtain more leadership training opportunities.²⁵

In June 2020, the U.K. government announced that the FCO and the Department for International Development (DFID) would amalgamate to form the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). The government said that the amalgamation would give U.K. aid “new prominence” in the country’s overseas agenda and would allow for a better alignment of development and diplomatic efforts.²⁶ As part of that same announcement, the government indicated that the U.K.’s trade commissioners would come under the authority of U.K. ambassadors overseas.

As is the case with Canada’s amalgamation of CIDA and DFAIT, the committee heard there are many different views about whether the U.K.’s merger has been a success or not. During its visit to London, the committee was told that work is still required to fully align the human resources and information technology systems of the two former departments. The committee was advised that further efforts are also needed to ensure greater foreign policy and development coherence in the FCDO and to better align the workplace cultures of the two former departments. In this regard, the committee was informed that the FCDO has sought the advice of GAC regarding lessons learned from Canada’s amalgamation. The FCDO is also continuing to push ahead with diplomatic modernization. For example, the committee heard that the FCDO has made diversity a priority in its recruitment of new officers. It was also told that the FCDO has created a new classification system for international crises intended to increase its agility in deploying surge resources abroad.

Norway

In 2020, Norway’s Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Foreign Affairs tasked Deloitte, a global professional services firm, and the Fridtjof Nansen Institute, an Oslo-based research foundation, with carrying out a comprehensive review of Norway’s foreign service. The review sought to develop ways to promote Norwegian interests abroad in a more effective and cost-

²⁵ United Kingdom (U.K.), Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), [Annual Report and Accounts: 2016–2017](#); U.K., FCO, [Annual Report and Accounts: 2017–2018](#); U.K., FCO, [Annual Report and Accounts: 2019–2020](#).

²⁶ Government of the U.K., [Prime Minister Announces Merger of Department for International Development and Foreign Office](#), Press release, June 16, 2020.

efficient manner. In 2021, the consultants delivered a report that made a number of recommendations, including that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs become the lead minister for all of the Norwegian government's international files.²⁷

The Norwegian government is currently implementing many of the recommendations made as part of this review. For instance, Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has tasked its various bureaus with identifying their core activities, as well as those functions which could be consolidated into a common services bureau. The committee was informed that Norway is streamlining its presence abroad by closing seven diplomatic missions. At the same time, Norway is increasing the number of diplomatic staff it deploys to certain key multilateral posts, including its mission to the European Union and its Permanent Delegation to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The committee was informed that this process of diplomatic consolidation is being driven by a recognition that, as a small country, Norway cannot have a presence everywhere and therefore must prioritize.

The committee was also told that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has delegated certain responsibilities to the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation. Under the new system, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation – which is a directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – will assume responsibility for managing nearly all of Norway's international assistance budget. This includes Norway's humanitarian assistance and large parts of the funding it provides to the United Nations (UN) – two areas of international assistance that had previously been managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The committee heard that these reforms are intended to allow the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to dedicate more resources to core foreign policy matters. In this respect, Norway has chosen a different path from Canada and the U.K., having opted for more separation between the foreign affairs and development portfolios, rather than greater integration.

Germany

The most recent comprehensive review of Germany's Federal Foreign Office – the country's foreign ministry – occurred in 2014–2015. That review resulted in a report called *Crisis – Order – Europe*, which focused on Germany's role on the global stage and how it could become better prepared to respond to international crises.²⁸ Emphasizing that crises were becoming “the new normal,” the report announced that the foreign office would create a new directorate for humanitarian assistance, crisis prevention, stabilization and post conflict reconstruction. This new directorate was intended to better pool resources and expertise, and to allow for the rapid deployment of personnel abroad to deal with international crises.

The report resulted in an action plan that set out various goals for the internal reorganization of the foreign office and its interactions with other government ministries. Among other

²⁷ Government of Norway, [Rapporter – områdegjennomgang av utenrikstjenesten](#) (Reports – Area Review of the Foreign Service) [TRANSLATION], October 1, 2021.

²⁸ Federal Foreign Office, [Review 2014 – A Fresh Look at German Foreign Policy: Crisis – Order – Europe](#), March 2015.

objectives, the action plan sought to make the foreign office more accessible to staff of other ministries and to stakeholders outside of the government. It also specified that, as a matter of course, career planning for members of the foreign service should include regular secondments to international, private sector and non-governmental organizations. The action plan further underlined that the foreign office should invest more in human resources, including in training, and should increase mentoring opportunities for its personnel.²⁹

In Berlin, the committee heard that the Federal Foreign Office is continuing to pursue a process of diplomatic renewal and modernization. Like Canada, the committee heard that Germany also needs to modernize its foreign service recruitment processes and to consider new ways of attracting young talent. Among other initiatives, the Federal Foreign Office has established a new unit on representation and diversity which aims to improve the diversity of its workforce. The committee also heard that the Federal Foreign Office has established a new stream of the foreign service which is intended to be mostly non-rotational. With this new stream, the Federal Foreign Office hopes to attract individuals to the foreign service for whom rotational work is a barrier or disincentive to joining. The committee was also informed that, like Canada, Germany is wrestling with the question of how to maintain a robust diplomatic presence abroad in an environment of budget cutbacks. The committee heard that the Federal Foreign Office is digitalizing and centralizing more of its administrative functions as a way of saving funds and freeing up time for diplomats to focus more on their core work abroad.

Part 2: An Overview of Canada's Foreign Service and Foreign Policy Machinery

The study shed light on the complex structure of the foreign policy machinery within the Government of Canada and the importance of the employees who make it work. This part of the report provides an overview of the roles and diversity of GAC employees. It also looks at the extent of Canada's representation abroad and the use of the network of missions by other federal departments and agencies. Additionally, this part of the report discusses how the various federal departments and agencies coordinate foreign policy implementation.

Employees

GAC employees are the driving force behind Canada's foreign service and foreign policy machinery. According to GAC's discussion paper on the future of diplomacy, the department has nearly 14,000 employees. Of these, 8,300 are CBS – including about 2,000 foreign service

²⁹ Josef Janning, [Germany's Foreign Ministry reinvents itself](#), European Council on Foreign Relations, Commentary, March 18, 2015.

officers – and 5,600 are LES.³⁰ Approximately half of all GAC employees are posted within Canada's network of missions abroad at any given time.³¹

The distribution of rotational and non-rotational employees within GAC's CBS workforce has shifted over the past few decades.³² According to David Morrison, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, GAC, although foreign service officers made up 50% of the department's CBS in the early 1990s, they now account for around 26%.³³ Mr. Morrison noted that the number of non-rotational positions has increased partly because of the expansion of the Trade Commissioner Service, the creation of headquarters-based positions to meet the department's duty of care to its staff posted abroad, and the 2013 merger of the DFAIT and CIDA.³⁴

Mr. Morrison also mentioned the decline in the percentage and number of CBS posted abroad.³⁵ He said that this decline can be explained partly by the advent of the Internet, which has changed the staffing needs of missions. As a result, certain categories of employees, such as staff who coded the telexes used before the Internet, no longer exist. Mr. Morrison told the committee that, while the number of Canadian missions abroad has increased since the 1990s, the total number of CBS posted abroad in 2023 is roughly the same as it was in 1990; this is partly because the functions of CBS within missions have changed over this period.³⁶

Canada-Based Staff

According to Michael Small, President of the Canadian Ambassadors Alumni Association, Canada's foreign service continues to be a career for most foreign service officers, who will spend the majority of their working years within it.³⁷ As noted in the introduction, "rotationality" is a condition of employment for foreign service officers. Mr. Small told the

³⁰ GAC, *Future of Diplomacy: Transforming Global Affairs Canada*, Discussion Paper, June 2023.

³¹ Government of Canada, [Minister of International Development appearance before the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade \(AEFA\) on study on the Canadian Foreign Service and elements of the foreign policy machinery within Global Affairs Canada, and on other related matters](#), November 3, 2022. During her [appearance](#) on June 9, 2022, Marta Morgan, then Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, GAC, said that nearly 6,700 GAC employees (out of a current total of over 13,000) were located abroad. As well, according to the report *Future of Diplomacy: Transforming Global Affairs Canada*, the number of GAC employees in Canada's missions includes 5,600 locally engaged staff and 2,777 Canada-based staff in 2022. However, this number of Canada-based staff also includes the Canada-based staff of other Government of Canada departments and agencies within the missions as well as provincial officials posted there.

³² For more information on these factors, see GAC, *Future of Diplomacy: Transforming Global Affairs Canada*, Discussion Paper, June 2023.

³³ AEFA, *Evidence*, June 8, 2023 (David Morrison).

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ About 19% of Canada-based staff were posted abroad in 2022. Government of Canada, [Minister of International Development appearance before the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade \(AEFA\) on study on the Canadian Foreign Service and elements of the foreign policy machinery within Global Affairs Canada, and on other related matters](#), November 3, 2022. This percentage may vary depending on the time of year and the total number of GAC Canada-based staff.

³⁶ AEFA, *Evidence*, June 8, 2023 (David Morrison).

³⁷ AEFA, *Evidence*, April 7, 2022 (Michael Small).

committee that rotationality means that foreign service officers are not attached to a specific position. Instead, GAC uses “pools” to manage officer staffing and promotions. According to Mr. Small, the rotationality of foreign service officers is an important asset for GAC, which can, depending on operational requirements, shift staff around as priorities change and the situation on the ground develops.³⁸ However, Mr. Small stressed that the use of pools brings with it significant responsibilities for the Human Resources Branch, which must maintain sufficient staffing levels to meet GAC requirements.

The committee also learned that non-rotational CBS sometimes perform tasks similar to those of foreign service officers. In March 2022, 20% of positions designated as foreign service were filled by non-rotational staff.³⁹ Non-rotational CBS are also sometimes deployed at Canada’s missions abroad based on the department’s operational needs and employee interests.

The committee looked at the attrition rate of CBS at GAC. In its discussion paper on the future of diplomacy, GAC acknowledges a significant difference between the average attrition rate for rotational employees, which was 3.4% for the past five fiscal years, and the attrition rate for certain other non-rotational professional groups, which was 9.9% for the same period.⁴⁰ According to David Morrison, the foreign service attrition rate is “considerably lower than comparators across the public service.” He added that for the “traditional workforce,” or non-rotational professional groups, the attrition rate is “slightly higher” than in the broader public service. Mr. Morrison said that the retention problem for these groups could be addressed by creating meaningful career paths for non-rotational employees.⁴¹

Locally Engaged Staff

Several witnesses emphasized the central role that LES – who on average make up 80% of staff at Canada’s missions abroad⁴² – play within each mission.⁴³ The committee learned, particularly during its fact-finding missions, that because of CBS rotations abroad, LES, who often possess corporate memory, provide continuity within each mission. Since they are usually nationals of the country in which the mission is located, Natasha Manji, Director General, International Policy and Partnerships Directorate, Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), told the committee that LES play a key role in helping CBS better understand local culture, language and relationships.⁴⁴

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ GAC, *Data on the Foreign Service Provided to the Committee*, September 28, 2022.

⁴⁰ GAC, *Future of Diplomacy: Transforming Global Affairs Canada*, Discussion Paper, June 2023.

⁴¹ AEFA, *Evidence*, June 8, 2023 (David Morrison).

⁴² GAC, *Data on the Foreign Service Provided to the Committee*, September 28, 2022.

⁴³ See in particular AEFA, *Evidence*, June 16, 2022 (Colin Robertson). The report *Future of Diplomacy: Transforming Global Affairs Canada* acknowledges that locally engaged staff “are the backbone of Canada’s global mission network.”

⁴⁴ AEFA, *Evidence*, October 19, 2022 (Natasha Manji).

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Issues surrounding equity, diversity and inclusion within the foreign service and GAC in general were raised a number of times during the study. The committee shares the view of the witnesses that GAC's CBS must be representative of Canada's overall diversity, including its geographic, cultural and linguistic diversity. The committee views this diversity as a strength for Canadian diplomacy and supports the objectives of the *Transformation Implementation Plan* to fast-track implementation of the department's action plans in this regard.⁴⁵

By 2022, more than half of GAC's CBS, including foreign service officers, were women.⁴⁶ With regard to women in senior positions, Sandra McCardell, who at the time was Assistant Deputy Minister, Europe, Arctic, Middle East and Maghreb and Champion of the Women's Network, GAC, noted that parity among heads of Canadian missions abroad was achieved as early as 2018 and that there are as many women as men in the department's management positions.⁴⁷

The committee learned that 26% of GAC's CBS self-identified as belonging to a "visible minority" in 2022 while, according to the Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers (PAFSO), 16% of foreign service officers self-identify this way.⁴⁸ Ayesha Rekhi, who at the time was Ambassador to the Czech Republic and Champion for the Visible Minorities Network, GAC, noted an increase in the representation of racialized individuals as heads of mission over the past five years: in 2018, 3.7% of heads of mission self-identified as belonging to a visible minority, while in 2022 they represented 17% of heads of missions.⁴⁹

There are gaps in the representation of certain population groups among GAC employees, including those who are Black, Indigenous⁵⁰ or living with a disability. This gap is particularly prevalent in management positions. According to Ms. Rekhi, the experiences of Black employees require "more attention and action" from GAC, even though their representation at the executive level at GAC has gone up from 0.8% in 2018 to 1.1% in 2022.⁵¹ Ms. McCardell noted that GAC's diversity networks are encouraging the department to obtain more detailed

⁴⁵ In the Transformation Implementation Plan, GAC indicates that it will: "advance the implementation of the department's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Plan and apply an EDI and intersectional GBA+ lens to all transformation initiatives;" "expand the implementation of the Anti-Racism Strategy Action Plan;" "accelerate the implementation of the department's Action Plan on Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples;" and "fully implement the department's Accessibility Plan to remove and prevent barriers [...] for persons with disabilities." Antoine Chevrier (@ChevrierAntoine), "[Our organizational culture: Strengthening our foundation...](#)"X, September 18, 2023, 10:56AM.

⁴⁶ According to Pamela Isfeld, women made up 25% of the foreign service in 1981. For data on diversity within GAC's CBS, see AEFA, [Evidence](#), June 9, 2022 (Marta Morgan). For data on diversity among foreign service officers, see AEFA, [Evidence](#), April 7, 2022 (Pamela Isfeld).

⁴⁷ AEFA, [Evidence](#), April 19, 2023 (Sandra McCardell).

⁴⁸ Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers (PAFSO), [Brief](#) submitted to the Committee, September 2023. This percentage includes foreign service officers working in the "immigration" stream at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

⁴⁹ AEFA, [Evidence](#), April 19, 2023 (Ayesha Rekhi).

⁵⁰ According to Marta Morgan, people of Indigenous origin made up 6% of GAC's CBS in 2022. AEFA, [Evidence](#), June 9, 2022 (Marta Morgan).

⁵¹ AEFA, [Evidence](#), April 19, 2023 (Ayesha Rekhi).

data on the effects of intersectionality in order to identify barriers and develop policies to encourage the promotion of certain groups, including Black women.⁵²

Vikas Sharma, Executive Director, Andean Region Division and Champion for the Persons with Disabilities Network, GAC, argued that GAC employees might be reluctant to self-identify as having a disability, which can sometimes be invisible, for fear of limiting career prospects. He used the example of an employee diagnosed with autism who was afraid to report the condition because of possible career repercussions. Mr. Sharma urged GAC to foster a culture and environment in which people living with a disability feel comfortable self-identifying.⁵³

The committee heard about the challenges experienced within the foreign service by other population groups, including people identifying as 2SLGBTQI+.⁵⁴ Stewart Wheeler, then Chief of Protocol of Canada and Director General of the Summits Management Office and Champion of the 2SLGBTQI+ Network, GAC, told the committee that he has noticed progress for 2SLGBTQI+ staff at GAC during his career.⁵⁵

The committee also looked at where young people fit within GAC during the study. The committee was surprised to learn that in March 2021, the average age of foreign service officers, 47,⁵⁶ was significantly higher than the average age of all GAC's CBS, 43.⁵⁷ In its brief submitted in September 2023, PAFSO indicated that the average age of its members, including foreign service officers within IRCC, was 45.⁵⁸

Canada's Network of Missions Abroad

GAC manages Canada's network of missions abroad, currently made up of 178 missions in 110 countries. This network is expected to grow to 182 missions, including 12 multilateral missions, by the end of 2023, when Canada will have opened four new missions: embassies in Yerevan, Armenia, and Suva, Fiji, as well as a mission in Milan, Italy, and a multilateral mission dedicated to the African Union.⁵⁹ In addition, four existing missions will be converted into

⁵² AEFA, *Evidence*, April 19, 2023 (Sandra McCardell).

⁵³ AEFA, *Evidence*, April 19, 2023 (Vikas Sharma).

⁵⁴ Pamela Isfeld said that 10% of foreign service officers self-identity as 2SLGBTQI+. AEFA, *Evidence*, April 7, 2022 (Pamela Isfeld).

⁵⁵ AEFA, *Evidence*, April 19, 2023 (Stewart Wheeler). GAC's 2SLGBTQI+ Network prepared a document on the types of accreditations that countries hosting Canadian missions abroad are prepared to extend to diplomats who self-identify as 2SLGBTQI+ and their family members. The document also contains information on the general living conditions for 2SLGBTQI+ people in these countries.

⁵⁶ GAC, *Data on the Foreign Service Provided to the Committee*, September 28, 2022.

⁵⁷ Government of Canada, "[Employee Age \(March 2017 to March 2021\)](#)," Infographic for Global Affairs Canada, database accessed September 30, 2023.

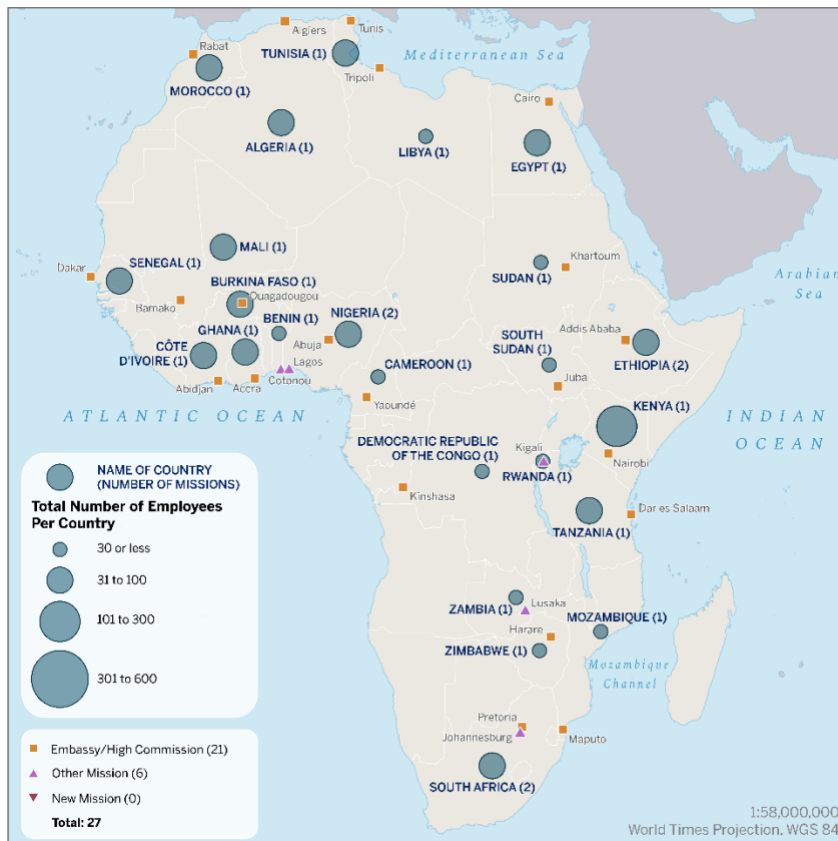
⁵⁸ PAFSO, *Brief* submitted to the committee, September 2023.

⁵⁹ GAC, *Future of Diplomacy: Transforming Global Affairs Canada*, Discussion Paper, June 2023. Ben Marc Diendéré was appointed Permanent Observer to the African Union on June 6, 2023. This role was previously held by Canada's Ambassador to Ethiopia. Government of Canada, [Announcement of new diplomatic appointment](#), News release, June 6,

embassies in 2023.⁶⁰ During her appearance before the committee, the Honourable Mary Ng, Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, said that trade capacity would also be strengthened as part of Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy.⁶¹ On September 5, 2023, Minister Ng announced the opening of an export development office in Jakarta, Indonesia, and the appointment of a trade representative.⁶²

The following maps show the number of Canadian missions in each country, as well as the total number of employees per country.⁶³

Map 1. Canada's Missions in North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa



Note: The Canadian Embassy in Libya and the Canadian Embassy in Sudan have temporarily suspended operations.

2023; [Announcement of new diplomatic appointment](#), News release, February 16, 2021. Andrew Turner was appointed Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia on September 25, 2023. Government of Canada, [Announcement of new diplomatic appointments](#), September 25, 2023.

⁶⁰ The missions in Estonia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Rwanda will be converted to embassies. Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly [opened](#) the Canadian Embassy in Lithuania in July 2023; Canada's Ambassador to the Republic of Estonia [was appointed](#) on July 18, 2023; and Canada's Ambassador to Slovakia [was appointed](#) on August 8, 2023.

⁶¹ AEFA, [Evidence](#), December 15, 2022 (Hon. Mary Ng).

⁶² Canadian Press, "[Canada's promised Indo-Pacific trade representative to be based in Jakarta: Mary Ng](#)," *CBC*, September 5, 2023.

⁶³ Canada's global representation abroad has been split into five maps to show information about each country.

Note: The total number of missions includes Canada's Permanent Observer to the African Union (Ethiopia).

Source: Map created in 2023, using data from Global Affairs Canada (GAC), *Data on the Foreign Service Provided to the Committee*, September 28, 2022; GAC, *Future of Diplomacy: Transforming Global Affairs Canada*, Discussion Paper, June 2023; GAC, *Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs – Briefing Book*, October 2022; GAC, *Minister Joly announces expansion of diplomatic relations with Rwanda and appointment of new ambassador to African Union*, News release, June 22, 2022; Natural Earth, *1:10m Physical Vectors*, version 5.1.1; and Natural Earth, *1:10m Cultural Vectors*, version 5.1.1. The following software was used: Esri, ArcGIS Pro, version 3.1.3.

Map 2. Canada's Missions in the Americas and the Caribbean

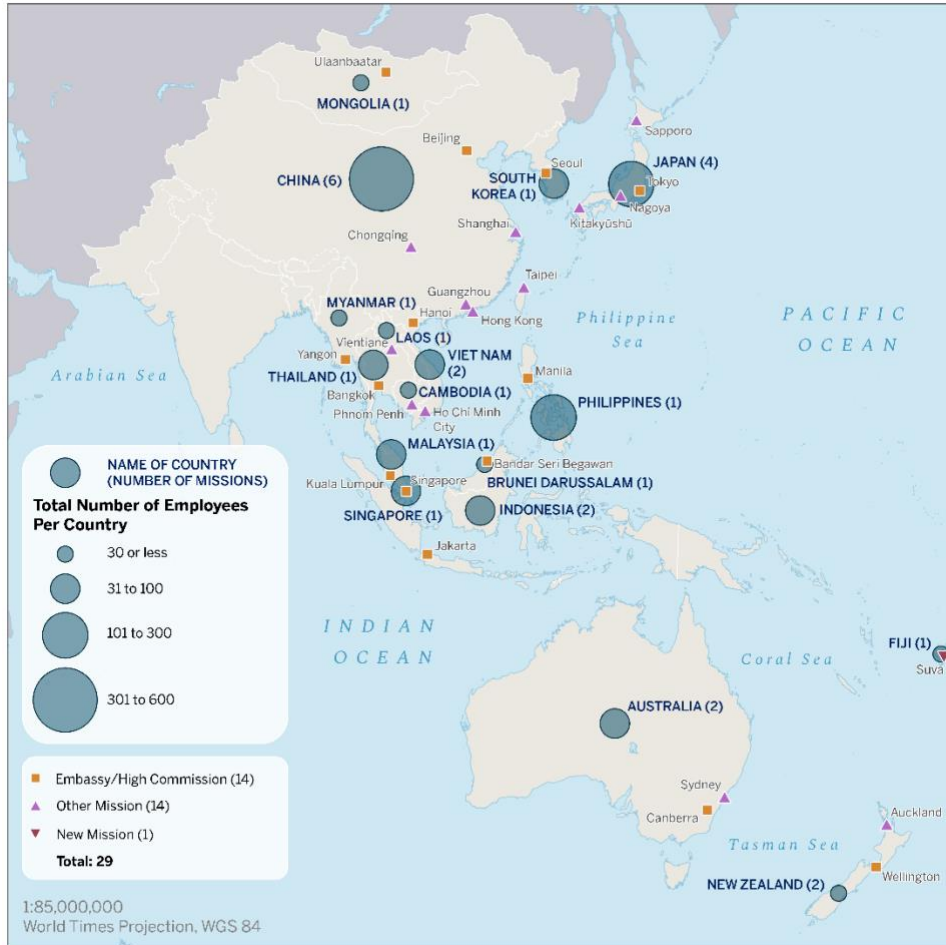


Note: Canada's Embassy to Venezuela in Caracas has temporarily suspended operations.

Note: The number of missions includes the Permanent Mission of Canada to the Organization of American States (United States) and Canada's Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York (United States).

Source: Map created in 2023, using data from Global Affairs Canada (GAC), *Data on the Foreign Service Provided to the Committee*, September 28, 2022; GAC, *Future of Diplomacy: Transforming Global Affairs Canada*, Discussion Paper, June 2023; GAC, *Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs – Briefing Book*, October 2022; Natural Earth, *1:10m Physical Vectors*, version 5.1.1; and Natural Earth, *1:10m Cultural Vectors*, version 5.1.1. The following software was used: Esri, ArcGIS Pro, version 3.1.3.

Map 3. Canada's Missions in East Asia and Oceania



Note: The number of missions includes Canada's Permanent Mission to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Indonesia).

Source: Map created in 2023, using data from Global Affairs Canada (GAC), *Data on the Foreign Service Provided to the Committee*, September 28, 2022; GAC, *Future of Diplomacy: Transforming Global Affairs Canada*, Discussion Paper, June 2023; GAC, *Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs – Briefing Book*, October 2022; Natural Earth, *1:10m Physical Vectors*, version 5.1.1; and Natural Earth, *1:10m Cultural Vectors*, version 5.1.1. The following software was used: Esri, ArcGIS Pro, version 3.1.3.

Map 4. Canada's Missions in Europe and Russia



Note: The number of missions includes the Permanent Delegation of Canada to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (France), the Permanent Delegation of Canada to UNESCO (France), the Mission of Canada to the European Union (Belgium), the Canadian Joint Delegation to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (Belgium), the Permanent Mission of Canada in Geneva (Switzerland), the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations in Geneva (Switzerland), the Canadian Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (Austria), and the Permanent Mission of Canada to International Organisations in Vienna (Austria).

Source: Map created in 2023, using data from Global Affairs Canada (GAC), *Data on the Foreign Service Provided to the Committee*, September 28, 2022; GAC, *Announcement of new diplomatic appointments*, News release, August 8, 2023; GAC, *Canada appoints its first ambassador to Estonia*, News release, July 18, 2023; GAC, *Minister Joly concludes participation at NATO Summit and Embassy opening in Lithuania*, News release, July 11, 2023; GAC, *Future of Diplomacy: Transforming Global Affairs Canada*, Discussion Paper, June 2023; GAC, *Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs – Briefing Book*, October 2022; GAC, *Minister Joly announces expansion of Canada’s diplomatic presence in Central and Eastern Europe and Caucasus*, News release, June 29, 2022; Natural Earth, *1:10m Physical Vectors*, version 5.1.1; and Natural Earth, *1:10m Cultural Vectors*, version 5.1.1. The following software was used: Esri, ArcGIS Pro, version 3.1.3.

Map 5. Canada's Missions in Central Asia, South Asia and West Asia



Note: The Canadian Embassy in Afghanistan has temporarily suspended operations.

Source: Map created in 2023, using data from Global Affairs Canada (GAC), *Data on the Foreign Service Provided to the Committee*, September 28, 2022; GAC, *Future of Diplomacy: Transforming Global Affairs Canada*, Discussion Paper, June 2023; GAC, *Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs – Briefing Book*, October 2022; GAC, *Minister Joly announces expansion of Canada's diplomatic presence in Central and Eastern Europe and Caucasus*, News release, June 29, 2022; Natural Earth, *1:10m Physical Vectors*, version 5.1.1; and Natural Earth, *1:10m Cultural Vectors*, version 5.1.1. The following software was used: Esri, ArcGIS Pro, version 3.1.3.

Use of the Network of Missions Abroad

Management of the network of missions abroad is the responsibility of GAC, through the International Platform Branch. This platform also coordinates use of the network of missions by other federal departments and agencies, as well as by provinces that have posted staff abroad to fulfill part of their mandate.⁶⁴

Government departments and agencies told the committee that posting CBS to Canadian missions allows them to gather information, develop overseas relationships relevant to their respective mandates, and deliver capacity-building activities as appropriate. Natasha Manji pointed out that the networks developed by the CBSA proved especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic for facilitating the repatriation of Canadians and the delivery of vaccines.⁶⁵ Major-General Blaise Frawley, Deputy Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces, told the committee that CBS provide advice and support to Canadian heads of missions. They act under the direction of the head of mission in all matters, “except for those of a specific Department of National Defence or Canadian Armed Forces nature.”⁶⁶ The committee also heard that other government departments and agencies that use Canada’s network of missions also hire LES. Ms. Manji pointed out that the CBSA hires around 50 LES.⁶⁷

Liam Price, Director General, International Special Services, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), told the committee that GAC uses memoranda of understanding (MOUs) to set the parameters for use of the mission network by federal departments and agencies.⁶⁸ According to Newton Shortliffe, Acting Deputy Director, Operations, Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), the MOUs articulate the nature of the relationship between staff posted abroad and GAC, as well as the financial arrangements between GAC and each government department and agency involved.⁶⁹ Both the RCMP and CSIS agree that the MOUs currently in place are working well, and that adjustments are made as needed.⁷⁰ Mr. Price also

⁶⁴ The following departments and agencies use GAC’s international platform: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; the Canadian Food Inspection Agency; the Canada Border Services Agency; the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission; the Canadian Space Agency; Communications Security Establishment Canada; the Department of National Defence; Employment and Social Development Canada; Health Canada; Innovation, Science and Economic Development; Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada; National Research Council Canada; the Department of Justice; Natural Resources Canada; the Public Health Agency of Canada; Public Safety; Public Services and Procurement Canada; the Royal Canadian Mounted Police; Transport Canada; and Veterans Affairs Canada. The following Crown corporations use Canada’s international platform abroad: Canadian Commercial Corporation; Export Development Canada; and the Bank of Canada. The Mission Network is used by six provincial governments: Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick, Ontario, Quebec and Saskatchewan. Entities using the mission network participate in the governance structures put in place to manage Canada’s representation abroad. See GAC, [*Data on the Foreign Service Provided to the Committee*](#), September 28, 2022.

⁶⁵ AEFA, [*Evidence*](#), October 19, 2022 (Natasha Manji).

⁶⁶ AEFA, [*Evidence*](#), November 30, 2022 (Major-General Blaise Frawley).

⁶⁷ AEFA, [*Evidence*](#), October 19, 2022 (Natasha Manji).

⁶⁸ AEFA, [*Evidence*](#), October 6, 2022 (Liam Price).

⁶⁹ AEFA, [*Evidence*](#), October 6, 2022 (Newton Shortliffe).

⁷⁰ Ibid; AEFA, [*Evidence*](#), October 6, 2022 (Liam Price).

acknowledged GAC's efforts to increase transparency and information sharing regarding the use of missions by other departments and agencies.

Witnesses said that various departments and agencies, including the RCMP, shift resources from one region to another as needed in response to changing trends in their areas of responsibility.⁷¹ Government departments and agencies work "closely" with GAC and the Committee on Representation Abroad to make decisions about changes to the location and number of positions in the network of missions.⁷²

Merger of the Canadian International Development Agency and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

In 2013, the federal government initiated the merger of CIDA and DFAIT.⁷³ According to Marta Morgan, this "ambitious transformation" created a single organization, which now has shared financial and management systems and a consolidated workforce.⁷⁴ The Honourable Harjit S. Sajjan, then Minister of International Development, testified that the merger "allows international assistance expertise to inform coherent responses to global challenges."⁷⁵ Gilles Rivard, Fellow, Montreal Institute of International Studies, also believes that the merger helped make Canada's international relations more coherent. He told the committee that the merger has meant that any differences in views or strategies that may have existed before the merger are now discussed between deputy ministers within GAC.⁷⁶

Witnesses discussed the challenges that remain following the merger. Mr. Rivard said that 10 years later, there is still the lingering perception, albeit to a lesser degree, that development cooperation specialists are not the equals of employees elsewhere in GAC. This also applies to foreign service officers in the "international assistance" stream, who are not perceived as "real FS." According to Mr. Rivard, some employees with broad experience in development cooperation left GAC, partly because of the lack of recognition of the role of development cooperation. This expertise is said to have been partially replaced.⁷⁷

Mr. Rivard suggested a number of ways to help rebuild development expertise and increase recognition of the role of development cooperation in Canada's international relations. He recommended recruiting more managers and officers with development expertise and experience. He also suggested expanding and diversifying the development cooperation training offered by the Canadian Foreign Service Institute, particularly in project planning and

⁷¹ AEFA, *Evidence*, October 6, 2022 (Liam Price).

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ According to Gilles Rivard, the Department of Foreign Affairs briefly had a development aid stream from 1983 to 1989. See AEFA, *Evidence*, April 28, 2022 (Gilles Rivard).

⁷⁴ AEFA, *Evidence*, June 9, 2022 (Marta Morgan).

⁷⁵ AEFA, *Evidence*, November 3, 2022 (Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan).

⁷⁶ See AEFA, *Evidence*, April 28, 2022 (Gilles Rivard).

⁷⁷ Ibid.

management. Lastly, he recommended encouraging new foreign service officers in all streams to acquire development expertise, as well as offering greater flexibility in the postings of international assistance officers, who can only be posted to developing countries.⁷⁸

Minister Sajjan told the committee that, while progress has been made on policy coherence since the merger, he would like to see greater synergy between the department's different streams.⁷⁹ According to the Honourable John Baird, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, the vision of a truly integrated team has not lived up to its full potential; the bureaucracy is still too fragmented, and fiefdoms have remained in place. Mr. Baird hopes that GAC will be able to break down the fiefdoms and reap maximum benefits by ensuring that diplomacy, trade and development work in tandem, not in silos.⁸⁰

The committee believes that GAC should take steps to continue strengthening policy coherence and expand the recognition and role of international development within Canada's foreign policy. The committee makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation 2

Global Affairs Canada should strengthen policy coherence and break silos between trade, diplomacy and development cooperation.

Recommendation 3

Global Affairs Canada should better reflect emerging trends in the field of development cooperation in training modules offered by the Canadian Foreign Service Institute. Training should include a greater focus on planning and project management in development cooperation.

Recommendation 4

Global Affairs Canada should encourage all foreign service officers and non-rotational staff, regardless of their area of expertise, to strengthen their knowledge of development cooperation policy and its application.

Recommendation 5

Global Affairs Canada should evaluate options to allow foreign service officers in the international assistance stream and development cooperation specialists to seek postings outside of developing countries.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ AEFA, *Evidence*, November 3, 2022 (Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan).

⁸⁰ AEFA, *Evidence*, March 9, 2023 (Hon. John Baird).

Interdepartmental Coordination

Given the international dimensions of many national issues, several government departments and agencies play a role in implementing foreign policy issues and priorities.

Interdepartmental coordination on these issues is crucial. According to GAC, this coordination occurs on an ongoing basis at several levels and through a variety of formal and informal mechanisms.⁸¹

The committee heard from government departments and agencies coordinating the advancement of strategic policies in co-operation with GAC. Stephen de Boer, then Assistant Deputy Minister, International Affairs Branch, Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), told the committee how the Canadian government's international environment and climate change responsibilities are shared with GAC. On the one hand, ECCC is "front and centre for the Government of Canada in dealing with the triple crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution" and maintains bilateral relations with several countries to manage these issues. On the other hand, the issue of climate finance is one of the files jointly managed by ECCC, which offers policy advice, and GAC, which allocates the majority of the funding envelope.⁸² Mr. de Boer highlighted the way the two departments have developed a governance structure to better coordinate Canada's actions on climate finance.

Regarding interdepartmental coordination for the Conference of the Parties (COP), Catherine Stewart, Ambassador for Climate Change, ECCC, described it as "a pretty well-oiled machine."⁸³ Mr. de Boer added that ECCC works regularly with Canada's missions abroad to prepare for international negotiations and multilateral meetings, including the G7 and G20.⁸⁴

There is a growing trend in many countries for other government departments and agencies to play an increasing role in implementing international files. During its fact-finding mission to the U.S., the committee learned that many Canada-U.S. issues are managed by government departments other than the State Department. Similarly, around 30% of Germany's foreign mission staff are now from ministries other than the Foreign Office.

The committee encourages the development of processes and mechanisms to ensure effective interdepartmental coordination of foreign policy files.

⁸¹ GAC, *Data on the Foreign Service Provided to the Committee*, September 28, 2022. These could be coordination tables for senior officials chaired by GAC, or co-chaired with another department in the case of cross-cutting or high-profile issues. In the information provided to the committee, GAC also explains that formal coordination structures are developed to plan Canada's participation in international forums such as the G7 or the United Nations General Assembly. In addition to these formal efforts is a wide range of ad hoc coordination efforts at various levels of government, including those between GAC employees responsible for various issues and geographic regions, and employees from other departments and agencies on cross-cutting issues.

⁸² AEFA, *Evidence*, October 19, 2022 (Stephen de Boer).

⁸³ AEFA, *Evidence*, October 19, 2022 (Catherine Stewart).

⁸⁴ AEFA, *Evidence*, October 19, 2022 (Stephen de Boer).

Recommendation 6

In foreign policy files involving multiple federal departments and agencies, the Government of Canada should clearly identify the role of each party, including the department or agency taking the coordinating or lead policy role. The Government of Canada should also identify the role that Canada's missions abroad can play in advancing key foreign, trade and international development policy files.

Part 3: A Foreign Ministry Fit for Purpose

Daniel Livermore, Honorary Senior Fellow, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa, presented the committee with two scenarios for the future of the Canadian foreign service. In the first scenario, he painted a bleak picture, saying that the Government of Canada could:

drop the Trade Commissioner Service and the consular service, replacing them with websites and 1-800 numbers; cancel our development programs in favour of cheques to organizations that do good work; and close most of our 175 missions, replacing expensive Canadian staff with contracted locals and honorary consuls.⁸⁵

By contrast, he framed the second scenario as one in which GAC gets “serious about the type of foreign service that a country like Canada needs both now and two decades from now.” According to Mr. Livermore, in today’s “highly competitive, conflict-prone international world, the Canadian foreign service needs to meet the challenges of tomorrow.”

The committee agrees. Part 3 of this report looks at how Canada can and must ensure that the Canadian foreign service and GAC are fit for purpose.

Greater Risk-Taking and a Smaller Bureaucracy

Witnesses called for changes in organizational culture when it comes to risk-taking and red tape. According to Pamela Isfeld, President, PAFSO, GAC still has a risk-averse culture even though the disruptions of recent years, including the COVID pandemic, have forced the department to be more flexible and to take risks. During her appearance in April 2022, she said that the department is not able “to look very far ahead, to make decisions and to plan to take risks.”⁸⁶

Michael Small added that risk-averse cultures can also be found in other parts of the public service. He said that one of the reasons for this culture is that accountability processes have

⁸⁵ AEFA, [Evidence](#), April 7, 2022 (Daniel Livermore).

⁸⁶ AEFA, [Evidence](#), April 7, 2022 (Pamela Isfeld).

gradually become overly burdensome.⁸⁷ In connection with risk-taking, witnesses also raised the importance of fostering “diversity of thought” within GAC. John Baird said that there were times when there was too much “groupthink” within GAC. He spoke about the benefits of having “robust” discussions that include a diversity of views. In Mr. Baird’s experience, these types of discussions made for the best policy decisions. However, it can be difficult for some GAC employees, especially young diplomats, to express a different view. He suggested creating an environment where all employees feel free to speak up.⁸⁸

GAC told the committee that it is looking to address the issue of risk-taking within the organization as part of the future of diplomacy initiative. According to David Morrison,

[t]rying to become less risk-averse — or becoming less risk-averse — will make [GAC] a much more nimble, responsive, agile and learning organization.⁸⁹

According to witnesses, this risk-averse culture is reflected in the limited decision-making latitude available to field officers, and in the cumbersome red tape in certain approval processes. In its future of diplomacy implementation plan, GAC announced that the department will launch a process to review the red tape in certain processes used at headquarters and in missions abroad. The committee supports this initiative, which is in line with many comments made by witnesses.

Management Structure

GAC’s senior management structure, and the qualifications of these officials, was raised by some witnesses as an issue to be assessed in order to ensure that the department is fully capable of fulfilling its mandate. The Canadian Foreign Service Alumni Forum called for a major management restructuring to reduce the senior management cadre by half. They argue that this would free up resources for other departmental priorities. They added that along with reducing the number of senior managers, authority needs to be delegated to lower levels. According to the Canadian Foreign Service Alumni Forum, deputy ministers and assistant deputy ministers should focus on strategic issues, while directors general would be responsible for managing relationships and programs involving their portfolios.⁹⁰

Some witnesses suggested that having field experience was an asset for GAC senior officials. The Right Honourable Joe Clark, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and former Prime Minister, told the committee that when he was Minister of Foreign Affairs, the departmental senior officials’ field experience and resulting personal knowledge of what was happening in the missions enriched the advice these senior officials gave the minister and his Cabinet colleagues. Mr. Clark “strongly believe[s] that the whole-of-world perspective is critical to a

⁸⁷ AEFA, *Evidence*, April 7, 2022 (Michael Small).

⁸⁸ AEFA, *Evidence*, March 9, 2023 (Hon. John Baird).

⁸⁹ AEFA, *Evidence*, June 8, 2023 (David Morrison).

⁹⁰ Canadian Foreign Service Alumni Forum, *Brief* submitted to the committee, November 17, 2022.

department of global affairs.”⁹¹ The committee agrees with these views and makes the following recommendations.

Recommendation 7

Global Affairs Canada should examine its current senior management structure and evaluate options for reducing the number of senior officials with the objective of reallocating resources made available by that process. It should also explore ways to empower mid-level management by delegating more authority to directors general and other executives.

Recommendation 8

The Government of Canada should ensure that Global Affairs Canada's senior officials, including deputy ministers, have in-depth knowledge of and experience in international affairs.

Recruitment and Staffing

The lack of recruitment of Canadian foreign service officers over a decade-long period was a recurrent theme of the committee's study. The committee was informed that, due to budget constraints, GAC largely suspended its nationwide post-secondary entry-level foreign service recruitment between 2009 and 2019. Multiple witnesses indicated that this long period with limited recruitment left significant gaps in the foreign service. The lack of foreign service recruitment led the department to “gap fill” by increasing the number of determinate employees, including short-term contractors and students.

GAC indicated in its future of diplomacy discussion paper that the “virtual halting of entry level and other recruitment into foreign service positions for over a decade because of financial constraints” contributed to a rebalancing between foreign service and other occupational groups at GAC.⁹² According to the department, “[f]ailure to recruit regularly meant that while foreign service employees still went abroad, work that had previously been done by foreign service employees at headquarters began to be done by other professional groups, many of whom first entered the department as casual or term employees.”⁹³

GAC indicated in June 2022 that, out of a total of 2,494 funded rotational positions (foreign service and executive pools), 435 positions (17%) were unfilled.⁹⁴ According to a brief by PAFSO, this large number of vacancies has forced many foreign service officers “to shoulder

⁹¹ AEFA, *Evidence*, March 22, 2023 (Rt. Hon. Joe Clark).

⁹² GAC, *Future of Diplomacy: Transforming Global Affairs Canada*, Discussion Paper, June 2023, p. 23.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ GAC, *Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Minister of International Development, Deputy Minister of International Trade, and Associate Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs before the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade (AEFA)*, 9 June 2022.

larger workloads with less support, increasing their risk of exhaustion and limiting their ability to engage in crucial long-term and proactive planning.”⁹⁵ PAFSO added:

This lack of depth also means GAC lacks the agility to respond nimbly to emerging needs or crises without compromising on the delivery of longstanding priorities, as existing rapid deployment teams are drawn from line divisions, rather than being part of a standing crisis management pool.⁹⁶

Inconsistent foreign service hiring was connected to what some witnesses suggested was a lack of surge capacity at GAC. When she testified in April 2022, Pamela Isfeld said that GAC was struggling to fill management consular positions needed to respond to the war in Ukraine.⁹⁷ While noting that GAC has attempted to upgrade its responsive capacity in recent years, Daniel Livermore referred to the Canadian foreign service as “very thin on the ground.”⁹⁸ He added that this means that when an individual needs to leave a post “because of COVID or because of another type of problem, you basically emaciate the capacity of that post to function.” According to Mr. Livermore:

The plain fact is that the foreign service isn't strong enough to function under those conditions. We need a much more resilient foreign service, much more flexible, with a surge capacity of personnel able to cope with these problems, and we don't have it. We've lost that surge capacity.⁹⁹

Mr. Livermore encouraged the government to increase foreign service recruitment to both account for attrition and to create a “redundancy” that can be used to quickly deploy foreign service officers to missions in need. PAFSO also called on GAC to create redundancy in the foreign service workforce. According to PAFSO, such an “overfill” would better allow Canada's missions to respond to development and shifting priorities without leaving their posts short-staffed.

Rising instability and crisis at the global level has underlined the need for a flexible and highly adaptable foreign service. Roland Paris, Full Professor and Director, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa, noted that since 2020, GAC has faced a “global pandemic and a massive repatriation of Canadians from around the world, the Trump administration, the two Michaels incident with China, the Afghanistan evacuation, global economic turmoil and now Russia's brutal invasion and war against Ukraine.”¹⁰⁰ In an environment of recurring international crises, Professor Paris questioned whether GAC had the

⁹⁵ PAFSO, [Brief](#) submitted to the committee, September 2023.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ AEFA, [Evidence](#), April 7, 2022 (Pamela Isfeld).

⁹⁸ AEFA, [Evidence](#), April 7, 2022 (Daniel Livermore).

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ AEFA, [Evidence](#), October 20, 2022 (Roland Paris).

ability to respond to “serial emergencies” all the while managing other aspects of Canadian foreign policy.

Michael Small said that GAC’s system of pool management “enables the flexibility and rotation that is essential for the foreign service to work and to respond to different needs and pressures.” However, to function properly, he said that the system of pool management requires a centralized function to ensure adequate and consistent staffing, which he noted “has not been fully done.” Mr. Small urged GAC to “resolve to keep hiring new recruits through thick and thin.”¹⁰¹ He said that maintaining “a rotational workforce requires regular, predictable, Canada-wide hiring processes. It cannot be done stop-start.”

Building an Inclusive Workforce

The committee was told that Canada should strive to build a foreign service that is diverse in the broadest sense. Witnesses indicated that the Canadian foreign service should be geographically diverse, representative of Canada’s cultural, linguistic, and ethnic populations, and inclusive of traditionally underrepresented groups, including Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, and members of the 2SLGBTQI+ community.

While the representation of some traditionally underrepresented groups within the foreign service has improved in recent years, more work is required to increase workplace diversity within GAC. A brief by the 1834 Fellowship, a civic leadership and public policy training program for Black Canadian youth, indicated that Black employees in GAC are not adequately represented in senior and executive leadership levels.¹⁰² The brief by the 1834 Fellowship also said that racial and cultural biases continue to exist in the department, which it stressed act as barriers to recruitment, promotion and career retention for Black Canadians within the foreign service. Among other recommendations, the brief urged GAC to reduce barriers to entry for Black Canadians in the foreign service and boost recruitment by “diversifying the job qualification standards and creating special considerations for the lived experiences of Black Canadians.”¹⁰³

Witnesses also emphasized the need for regional diversity within GAC and the Canadian foreign service. In a 2019 interview, Pamela Isfeld said that GAC’s system of hiring, in which many new recruits enter through co-op programs, may favour applicants from the Ottawa-Toronto-Montreal triangle.¹⁰⁴ Marissa Fortune, a member of GAC’s Young Professionals Network, indicated in her testimony that this issue continues to persist, noting that a disproportionate number of individuals who do co-op or student terms at GAC come from the

¹⁰¹ AEFA, [Evidence](#), April 7, 2022 (Michael Small).

¹⁰² 1834 Fellowship, [Brief](#) submitted to the committee, February 10, 2023.

¹⁰³ For the full list of recommendations and calls to action, see: 1834 Fellowship, [Brief](#) submitted to the committee, February 10, 2023.

¹⁰⁴ Catherine Tsalkis, [“A new full-time voice for Canada’s diplomatic corps,”](#) Open Canada, February 14, 2019.

National Capital Region. She encouraged the department to do more to improve its outreach to universities outside of Ontario and Quebec.¹⁰⁵

The committee also heard that GAC should make efforts to recruit individuals with a diversity of work experience. Morris Rosenberg, Former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, said that there should be more opportunity for mid-career entry into the foreign service from the private sector and other government departments.¹⁰⁶ As Roland Paris told the committee, in today's world, foreign policy touches on virtually every sector of our society. Given this reality, he encouraged GAC to look for opportunities to better integrate the perspectives of the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other government departments in its work.¹⁰⁷

Testing and Process

A final issue related to GAC's recruitment concerns practical questions about testing and process. External entry-level recruitment to the Canadian foreign service is done through the post-secondary recruitment campaign. Candidates apply by first taking the online public service entrance exam (PSEE). From there, candidates who have successfully passed the initial test are invited to take written proctored PSEE tests. Candidates who pass the in-person tests are then placed into a qualified pool from which they may be selected for an interview.¹⁰⁸

Several witnesses raised concerns about the PSEE as a tool to recruit individuals to the Canadian foreign service. Julien Labrosse, member of GAC's Young Professionals Network, referred to the PSEE as "essentially a math and logic test that has little relevance to the skills diplomats need in their careers."¹⁰⁹ Marissa Fortune also made the point that the standardized testing approach of the PSEE does not correspond to the skills and competencies required by foreign service officers.¹¹⁰ Sejal Tiwari, member of GAC's Young Professionals Network, said that testing done through the PSEE may screen out many quality candidates with strong language skills and other cultural competencies. Ms. Tiwari suggested that GAC could improve the representation of individuals identifying as Indigenous, Black, visible minority and racialized within the foreign service by being more targeted in its recruitment.¹¹¹

Members of the 1834 Fellowship offered a similar perspective in their brief, noting that the PSEE "does not adequately take into account the value of lived experience or test the essential cultural skills needed to be [a foreign service officer]."¹¹² The brief recommends that the PSEE be replaced with short answer questions which it says "would align foreign service recruitment

¹⁰⁵ AEFA, *Evidence*, September 28, 2022 (Marissa Fortune).

¹⁰⁶ AEFA, *Evidence*, June 16, 2022 (Morris Rosenberg).

¹⁰⁷ AEFA, *Evidence*, October 20, 2022 (Roland Paris).

¹⁰⁸ Foreign Service Examination & Career Counselling Inc., *How Tests & Interviews Work*.

¹⁰⁹ AEFA, *Evidence*, September 28, 2022 (Julien Labrosse).

¹¹⁰ AEFA, *Evidence*, September 28, 2022 (Marissa Fortune).

¹¹¹ AEFA, *Evidence*, September 28, 2022 (Sejal Tiwari).

¹¹² 1834 Fellowship, *Brief* submitted to the committee, February 10, 2023.

with other hiring processes in the Government of Canada, where applicants are asked to answer questions describing their experience with specific skills, programs, and scenarios.”

Finally, the committee heard concerns about the length and transparency of GAC’s foreign service recruitment process. Mr. Labrosse, for example, said that post-secondary recruitment processes for foreign service officers can take up to two years to complete. During that time, he said GAC provides limited information about timelines, next steps and expectations. For her part, Ms. Fortune said that GAC should revisit its recruitment process to make it more transparent and to improve communication with applicants.

Workforce Renewal

After years of limited recruitment, GAC launched two post-secondary entry-level foreign service recruitment campaigns in the past four years, the first in 2019 and the second in 2021. Marta Morgan told the committee in June 2022 that the first campaign brought in 80 new recruits, while the second one was expected to bring in 200. Ms. Morgan said that GAC was returning to a system of regular recruitment campaigns and the department’s goal was to have a competition every two years in order to “replenish the Foreign Service.”¹¹³

The committee also heard that IRCC is regularly recruiting foreign service officers in the immigration stream. However, unlike GAC, which launches intermittent recruitment campaigns, IRCC has a standing recruitment poster that invites individuals to undertake assessments for the position of a foreign service officer. The IRCC poster allows applicants to apply to be included in a pool from which the department can draw as positions become available. Pemi Gill, Director General, International Network, IRCC, told the committee that, like GAC, IRCC hires based on competencies, not on overseas experience, and that new recruits undergo a rigorous onboarding program that is aligned with that offered by GAC.¹¹⁴

Many of the issues and concerns raised by witnesses about Canadian foreign service recruitment were mentioned in GAC’s future of diplomacy discussion paper. For example, the paper said the department “should reform its approach to post-secondary recruitment,” including by focusing on under-represented populations and ensuring wider geographic representation across Canada. Specifically, the paper notes that recruitment efforts “should show better results in terms of representativeness, and specifically greater numbers of Black employees, Indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities.” It also states that the recruitment drives “should be held on an annual basis, to ensure a steady flow of new talent entering the department regularly, or downstream effects will be felt at all levels of the human resources planning cycle.” The paper also recognizes the limited entry points for bringing professionals and subject-matter experts into the foreign service mid-career. In this regard, it

¹¹³ AEFA, [Evidence](#), June 9, 2022 (Marta Morgan).

¹¹⁴ AEFA, [Evidence](#), October 6, 2022 (Pemi Gill).

states that “two-way exchanges and more opportunities for lateral entry” into the department can help alleviate this challenge.

The committee believes that regular recruitment is critical to a healthy Canadian foreign service. Not only is regular recruitment important for workforce renewal, but it will help bring down the average age of a Canadian foreign service officer and contribute to new energy and ideas within the department. The committee urges GAC to develop specific strategies and targets for each of the proposed areas of recruitment and staffing reform in its future of diplomacy initiative.

Recommendation 9

Global Affairs Canada should run an annual entry-level foreign service officer recruitment campaign with the aim of filling all vacancies in the Canadian foreign service and creating a redundancy that would enable Global Affairs Canada to deploy surge resources faster and more adeptly in emergency situations. The department should also ensure that recruitment processes, including the steps and expected timeframe for each step, are communicated clearly to applicants.

Recommendation 10

Global Affairs Canada should strive to build a workforce that is representative of the diversity of Canadian society. It should identify, and address, barriers faced by minority groups in the department, including Black and Asian Canadians and Indigenous peoples. It should also review and accelerate the implementation of its Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategies, plans and policies, including policies aimed at supporting the career advancement of traditionally underrepresented groups in the department and the Canadian foreign service.

Recommendation 11

Global Affairs Canada should evaluate options for replacing the public service entrance exam as the mechanism for testing applicants to the Canadian foreign service with other tests and processes that better assess the skills and competencies required by Canadian foreign service officers.

Recommendation 12

Global Affairs Canada should recruit more mid-career professionals from other government departments, as well as from outside of government, including the private sector, civil society organizations, educational institutions and think tanks.

Career Management

“Developing diplomatic skills is a long game.” These are the words of Michael Small who told the committee that acquiring diplomatic expertise requires years of experience working in different cultures, understanding the work of international organizations, building foreign

language capacity and learning from a range of colleagues and diplomatic counterparts.¹¹⁵ The committee heard that training is not a one-off exercise. It is something that must begin at onboarding and continue throughout a diplomat's career.

The committee heard concerns about the attention and resources that GAC has devoted to training and career management in recent years. According to a brief by the Canadian Foreign Service Alumni Forum, GAC previously employed a career management system that was “key to turning ‘generalist’ recruits into more specialized [foreign service officers] with linguistic skills and regional and functional expertise.”¹¹⁶ Under this system, each foreign service officer would identify a geographic specialization, which would generally be anchored by a foreign language, and they would be expected to pursue postings abroad and at headquarters consistent with that specialization. The brief indicates that foreign service officers would also be expected to have “at least one or possibly two” functional specializations, such as international security or trade promotion, and to take assignments that would see them hone that expertise.

The committee heard that GAC has moved away from a personalized system of career management for foreign service officers over the past two decades. According to the brief by the Canadian Foreign Service Alumni Forum, budget constraints at GAC have resulted in diminished resources for specialized training, and language training in particular, to the point where specialization in languages and geographic expertise has been discouraged.¹¹⁷ A brief by the Groupe de réflexion sur le développement international et la coopération, an organization made up of former heads of international cooperation organizations, suggested that insufficient prioritization of skills development and specialization at GAC has resulted in the appointment of individuals to management positions who have “little experience in the sectors or issues for which they become responsible.”¹¹⁸ According to this brief, GAC has “a strong generalist culture.”

Fostering Expertise

The committee heard troubling evidence about a loss of policy expertise within GAC. The erosion of expertise appears to be particularly acute at the level of GAC's geographic branches. The committee heard that the geographic branches often include a large contingent of students and other term employees who may be beginning their career and lack a depth of geographic expertise. By contrast, the committee was told that many foreign service officers prefer working in functional (i.e., thematic) branches, where they may have a chance to manage funds and where there is a sense of greater career and promotion opportunities.

¹¹⁵ AEFA, [Evidence](#), April 7, 2022 (Michael Small).

¹¹⁶ Canadian Foreign Service Alumni Forum, [Brief](#) submitted to the committee, November 17, 2022.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ Mario Renaud and Robert Letendre, Groupe de réflexion sur le développement international et la coopération, [Brief](#) submitted to the committee, February 2023.

A lack of targeted training for GAC employees, and a tendency to over-rotate foreign service officers, may be contributing to a loss of expertise within the department. In its future of diplomacy discussion paper, GAC acknowledged that concerns exist within the department regarding the fostering of expertise and training. The paper noted that some employees, including younger employees, have felt disadvantaged compared to foreign service officers in terms of their ability to access training resources. Specifically, the paper said that employees in certain personnel categories have “raised concerns with having less access to specialized training, fewer career advancement possibilities and lower priority for postings abroad.”¹¹⁹ It also indicated that there are “legitimate concerns” that GAC has tilted too far toward a generalist model of expertise and away from geographic or functional expertise.

A brief by former members of GAC’s legal bureau expressed specific concerns about a loss of legal expertise in the department. According to the brief, the department’s senior management has at times questioned the value of maintaining a functional bureau on legal affairs, “arguing that it would be more ‘cost effective’ to transfer the Department’s legal responsibilities to the Department of Justice.”¹²⁰ The brief, however, highlights the many foreign policy contributions that the department’s lawyers have made over the years, including with respect to the Ottawa Convention on landmines and various arms control, disarmament and verification regimes. Among other recommendations, the brief urges GAC to create a specialized stream of foreign service lawyers who could be posted to designated “legal positions” in key multilateral missions abroad (e.g., UN offices in New York City, Geneva, and The Hague). The committee strongly encourages GAC to maintain a functional legal affairs bureau and a legal advisor within the department.

A background paper provided to the committee by Ulric Shannon, a Canadian foreign service officer,¹²¹ indicates that foreign ministries worldwide are wrestling with the question of how to achieve the right balance between generalists and specialists.¹²² Mr. Shannon writes that, while there are “certainly pockets of expertise within the Canadian foreign service, the organizational culture of GAC often discourages specialization by treating it as incompatible with advancement into senior leadership.”¹²³ According to Mr. Shannon, if it expects to remain competitive with its peers and adversaries in the fight for global influence, Canada needs a foreign service that is represented by people who can “speak authoritatively by exhibiting ‘causal literacy’ on a range of global issues, as well as deep subject-matter knowledge of their assigned region or thematic focus.”¹²⁴

Many of the committee’s witnesses emphasized the need for targeted training and specialized expertise to meet emerging global challenges. Morris Rosenberg told the committee that GAC

¹¹⁹ GAC, *Future of Diplomacy: Transforming Global Affairs Canada*, Discussion Paper, June 2023, p. 24.

¹²⁰ Former members of GAC’s Legal Bureau, *Brief* submitted to the committee, November 15, 2022.

¹²¹ Mr. Shannon authored this paper while on leave from the Government of Canada.

¹²² Ulric Shannon, *Competitive Expertise and Future Diplomacy: Subject-Matter Specialization in Generalist Foreign Ministries*, Centre for International Policy Studies, University of Ottawa, August 2022.

¹²³ *Ibid*, p. 4.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 5.

should build departmental expertise about complex global challenges – such as climate change, global health security and the digital revolution – issues that he referred to as “critical to our well-being as a civilization and as a planet.”¹²⁵ Abbie Dann, Member of the Board of Directors, Canadian Executive Service Organization, also underlined the need for well-trained foreign service professionals capable of managing various new threats, including cyber warfare and disinformation.¹²⁶ For her part, Margaret Biggs underscored the need for a cadre of personnel who understand how development finance tools work and who can contribute meaningfully to deliberations taking place within multilateral organizations and international financial institutions.¹²⁷

The committee was told that GAC should enhance the resources it devotes to training. Among the most important mechanisms for training GAC employees is the Canadian Foreign Service Institute (CFSI). The primary training provider for GAC, the CFSI offers a range of practical courses, including on leadership, communication and writing, as well courses on thematic issues, such as human rights, gender-based analysis and bilateral and multilateral negotiations.¹²⁸ Together with GAC’s human resource branch, the CFSI sets out recommended training modules for employees across a variety of issue areas.¹²⁹ Notwithstanding this work, the committee heard that the CFSI requires more investment to ensure that GAC employees have access to regular training opportunities throughout their careers.

The committee believes that Canada should engage with likeminded countries to learn about how they train their foreign service officers. For example, during its fact-finding mission to Germany, the committee heard that new German foreign service recruits undergo paid preparatory training of one or more years at the Foreign Service Academy in Berlin. Among other areas, training for Germany’s foreign service includes courses on international law, consular affairs, intercultural understanding, communication, negotiation, and writing. Recruits also have opportunities to engage with other young diplomats through trips to international organizations located in Brussels, The Hague, Vienna and Geneva.

Norway is another useful example of a country that has devoted significant resources to building policy expertise within its foreign ministry. Despite its small population, Norway plays an outsized role within the international system, including as a key actor in the area of conflict mediation. Recognizing that some conflicts may last for decades, the committee heard that a feature of Norway’s peace and reconciliation work is a commitment to devote policy attention and resources over the long-term. During its fact-finding mission to Oslo, the committee also heard that Norway’s experience as a third-party mediator has also been built upon a

¹²⁵ AEFA, [Evidence](#), June 16, 2022 (Morris Rosenberg).

¹²⁶ AEFA, [Evidence](#), April 28, 2022 (Abbie Dann).

¹²⁷ AEFA, [Evidence](#), April 7, 2022 (Margaret Biggs).

¹²⁸ In addition to GAC, the Canadian Foreign Service Institute (CFSI) also offers training to clients in other federal, provincial and municipal governments, as well as non-governmental organizations, foreign governments and others. For more information of the services and courses offered by the CFSI, see: Government of Canada, [Canadian Foreign Service Institute](#).

¹²⁹ AEFA, [Evidence](#), April 19, 2023 (Stewart Wheeler).

willingness to accept risk – including the risk of failure – as well as a willingness to engage with the full range of parties to a conflict.

The committee believes that Canada could learn from Norway's example and experience. Like Norway, Canada also has a history of playing the role of honest broker to bring together parties to a conflict. Also, as a middle power like Norway, Canada must make choices about where to devote resources and policy attention to compete internationally and have meaningful policy impact. Much like Norway, Canada must prioritize and specialize in order to "punch above its weight."

As a knowledge-based organization, GAC needs to invest in its people through specialized policy training on an ongoing basis. As PAFSO said in its brief, GAC should also develop a mechanism, such as a skills inventory, to better track the expertise of employees so that they can be deployed more strategically.¹³⁰ Building and better deploying expertise will be critical to GAC's capacity to meet current and emerging challenges. Morris Rosenberg told the committee that GAC must foster "a learning culture in the department."¹³¹ The committee agrees.

Recommendation 13

Global Affairs Canada should establish a training roadmap for all Canada-based staff as part of a career management framework that includes access to a range of functional, geographic and practical skill-based training courses at the Canadian Foreign Service Institute.

Recommendation 14

Global Affairs Canada should establish a pathway in the Canadian foreign service for specialists who would be expected to maintain, with the support of relevant training, specific geographic, functional and/or linguistic expertise and competencies over the course of their career.

Recommendation 15

Global Affairs Canada should play a more active role in conflict mediation and resolution and should underwrite that capability with relevant employee training and career management support.

Recommendation 16

Global Affairs Canada should maintain a Legal Affairs Bureau and a Legal Advisor at the Assistant Deputy Minister level within the department.

¹³⁰ PAFSO, [Brief](#) submitted to the committee, September 2023.

¹³¹ AEFA, [Evidence](#), June 16, 2022 (Morris Rosenberg).

Language Training

In today's globalized world, language skills are critical to the functioning and success of any foreign service and foreign ministry. This is especially the case for Canada, a country with two official languages. As GAC indicated in its future of diplomacy discussion paper, "[p]roviding services in both official languages is a legal requirement, but projecting a bilingual Canada abroad and maintaining a work environment that is seamlessly bilingual are also core aspects of Canada's identity, diversity and strength."¹³²

Canadian foreign service officers must be bilingual as a condition of employment. The committee was informed that foreign service candidates who do not meet the official language proficiency requirements may be hired on *ab initio* status. According to Vera Alexander, Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources, during this period, the department pays for a candidate's official language training with the expectation that they obtain the required levels.¹³³ Only when the official language proficiency requirements are met does the department formally offer them a position in the foreign service. The committee heard that GAC's ability to hire individuals on an *ab initio* basis contributes to a more regionally diverse foreign service. As Michael Small explained, the foreign service could hire people who are already fully bilingual, but they would not be hired in representative numbers from across the country.¹³⁴

Notwithstanding GAC's efforts to hire and produce bilingual foreign service officers, some witnesses questioned whether this has translated into a truly bilingual department at the operational level. Pierre Guimond said that he "fear[s] a certain semblance of indifference or ill-advised complacency has crept into the department over time when it comes to using French internally and projecting the bilingual nature of Canadian diplomacy."¹³⁵ Minister Joly appeared to echo this concern when she underlined the need for GAC to strengthen proficiency in Canada's two official languages in line with the *Official Languages Act*. Minister Joly added, "Francophones within Global Affairs Canada have had concerns about this reality for too long."¹³⁶

Of course, the need for language skills among GAC employees extends well beyond proficiency in French and English. GAC's written submission to the committee indicated that approximately one third of all GAC positions abroad are designated as requiring foreign language proficiency. However, according to the department, over the past five years, only 70% of employees who received foreign language training ahead of a posting reached the target level during their period of training.¹³⁷ David Morrison said that individuals who do not

¹³² GAC, *Future of Diplomacy: Transforming Global Affairs Canada*, Discussion Paper, June 2023, p. 25.

¹³³ AEFA, *Evidence*, June 8, 2023 (Vera Alexander).

¹³⁴ AEFA, *Evidence*, April 7, 2022, (Michael Small).

¹³⁵ AEFA, *Evidence*, April 7, 2022 (Pierre Guimond).

¹³⁶ AEFA, *Evidence*, June 8, 2023 (Hon. Mélanie Joly).

¹³⁷ GAC, *Data on the Foreign Service Provided to the Committee*, September 28, 2022, p. 15.

meet their target levels are still deployed abroad with the expectation that they will continue to work on their language competency.¹³⁸

The Canadian Foreign Service Alumni Forum indicated in its brief that GAC's linguistic capacity has diminished in recent decades because of the cost of training. Specifically, it said that there are insufficient numbers of foreign service officers trained in languages such as Mandarin, Russian and Arabic. According to the brief, inadequate language competencies in these and other languages have limited the effective rotationality of its personnel and undermined the department's ability to build geographic expertise.¹³⁹

GAC's future of diplomacy discussion paper said that the department should increase its foreign language capacity. In particular, it said that GAC should "incentivize the learning and retention of foreign languages" and put more emphasis on language skills in its hiring process. It also said that the department should "immediately work to enhance its compliance rate for foreign language-designated posts."¹⁴⁰

The committee agrees with these points. It also wishes to emphasize the need to ensure that GAC is a fully functional bilingual department. Greater efforts should be made to appoint francophones to senior executive and management-level positions and to expand access to official language training for all employees. The department must also support the foreign language skills of its CBS through ongoing investments in training. As Daniel Livermore said, the good news is that there is "abundant linguistic capacity in Canada thanks to the diversity of our population."¹⁴¹ Canada should take full advantage of this comparative asset.

Recommendation 17

Global Affairs Canada should promote the equal use of French and English within the department, ensure that *ab initio* official language training is maintained, and expand official language training opportunities to all other employees, including both Canada-based staff and locally engaged staff.

Recommendation 18

Global Affairs Canada should increase its investment in foreign-language training and should provide regular opportunities for Canada-based staff that have been trained in a foreign language to maintain that linguistic expertise over their career.

¹³⁸ AEFA, *Evidence*, June 8, 2023 (David Morrison).

¹³⁹ Canadian Foreign Service Alumni Forum, *Brief* submitted to the committee, November 17, 2022.

¹⁴⁰ GAC, *Future of Diplomacy: Transforming Global Affairs Canada*, Discussion Paper, June 2023, p. 26.

¹⁴¹ AEFA, *Evidence*, April 7, 2022 (Daniel Livermore).

Mentorship

Mentorship is another key tool for supporting ongoing learning at GAC. The committee heard a range of views regarding the current mentorship systems in place within the department. According to GAC's written submission, the department's two-year onboarding program for new foreign service recruits includes a mentorship element.¹⁴² Gilles Rivard also informed the committee about a recent mentorship program launched by the department where former heads of missions provide advice and mentorship to new heads of missions.¹⁴³

By contrast, members of GAC's Young Professionals Network expressed concerns about what they said were a lack of mentorship opportunities at GAC for young professionals. Marissa Fortune said, for example, that mentorship is often something that is done informally through employee-led networks, such as the women's network, which she indicated are volunteer-led and lack structure and formalized processes for follow up. The committee heard similar messages about a lack of formalized mentorship opportunities for both CBS and LES at postings abroad.

According to Ms. Fortune, the department "would benefit from mentorship, namely, more integration and professional development for young employees."¹⁴⁴ Sejal Tiwari encouraged GAC to support mentorship opportunities such as the "Take me with you" initiative, which is utilized in some government departments, where managers and senior colleagues are encouraged to take more junior employees with them to observe and participate in high-level meetings.¹⁴⁵ The committee believes that mentorship opportunities should be a component of GAC's career management strategy.

Recommendation 19

Global Affairs Canada should ensure that all new employees have formalized access to a mentor, and the department should establish mentorship and job shadowing opportunities that all employees can access throughout their careers.

Secondments and Exchanges

Another issue that arose in the context of the discussions about career management is the benefit of gaining experience across and outside of government. The committee heard that greater efforts should be made to expose Canadian foreign service officers to the work of other government departments, international organizations and civil society organizations

¹⁴² GAC, [Data on the Foreign Service Provided to the Committee](#), September 28, 2022.

¹⁴³ AEFA, [Evidence](#), April 28, 2022 (Gilles Rivard).

¹⁴⁴ AEFA, [Evidence](#), September 28, 2022 (Marissa Fortune).

¹⁴⁵ AEFA, [Evidence](#), September 28, 2022 (Sejal Tiwari).

involved in international activities. As David Morrison told the committee, the era when the foreign ministry “had a monopoly on Canada’s international engagement is long gone.”¹⁴⁶

While GAC leads on the overall management of Canadian foreign policy, other government departments are increasingly involved with policy files with international connections and implications. On some international files, including with regard to climate change, global public health, cybersecurity, and critical minerals, other government departments provide the lead technical expertise while GAC plays more of a supporting and coordinating role. As an example of the interdepartmental collaboration that is increasingly required on international files, Morris Rosenberg pointed out that approximately two-thirds of the priorities set out in Minister Joly’s mandate letter are to be undertaken in cooperation with other government departments.¹⁴⁷

Michael Small explained that most foreign service officers spend the majority – or entirety – of their careers within the foreign service. While he said this has benefits in terms of gaining knowledge of the world, Mr. Small noted that it may also limit a foreign service officer’s knowledge about how other government departments contribute to Canadian foreign policy. Mr. Small suggested that “more could be done to make assignments in Canada outside of Global Affairs headquarters a standard component of any foreign service career.”¹⁴⁸ Len Edwards said that greater foreign service exposure to the work of other government departments could be done by way of a formal system of two-way exchanges. He also recommended that foreign service executives, or members of the EX group, be given opportunities to work on assignment in other government departments as a way of broadening outlook, developing leadership skills and preparing them to take on senior executive roles at GAC.¹⁴⁹

The committee heard that some foreign service officers may be hesitant to pursue exchanges or secondments in other government departments due to concerns about the possible impact on their career progression within the foreign service. Morris Rosenberg said that he believes “there is such a fear in the department that if you leave, out of sight is out of mind and it will be a career-limiting move.”¹⁵⁰ The committee heard a similar perspective from Sejal Tiwari, who said that members of GAC’s Young Professionals Network have expressed concern about the career impact of temporarily leaving the department for external assignments.¹⁵¹

Mr. Rosenberg said senior management at GAC should provide clear and consistent messaging that horizontal movement outside of GAC offers valuable experience that will be factored in with regard to promotions and postings. More broadly, the committee was told that senior

¹⁴⁶ AEFA, [Evidence](#), June 8, 2023 (David Morrison).

¹⁴⁷ AEFA, [Evidence](#), June 16, 2022 (Morris Rosenberg). See: Prime Minister of Canada, [Minister of Foreign Affairs Mandate Letter](#), December 16, 2021.

¹⁴⁸ AEFA, [Evidence](#), April 7, 2022 (Michael Small).

¹⁴⁹ AEFA, [Evidence](#), April 28, 2022 (Len Edwards).

¹⁵⁰ AEFA, [Evidence](#), June 16, 2022 (Morris Rosenberg).

¹⁵¹ AEFA, [Evidence](#), September 28, 2022 (Sejal Tiwari).

GAC executives should work with their counterparts in other government departments to encourage a cross-fertilization of talent. As Marissa Fortune put it: “[p]art of the solution is creating a more permeable organization, which allows for crosswalks between [other government departments] that do international work and Global Affairs Canada — so being less siloed and working together on whole-of-government issues with the organizations that have that expertise.”¹⁵²

There should also be more opportunities for GAC employees to work outside of government, including in the private sector, such as in industry groups, with civil society organizations and in educational institutions. In a brief, Andrew McLaughlin, Vice-President, General Counsel for Major Drilling Group and a former Canadian diplomat, encouraged GAC to embrace a more “heterogeneous diplomatic ecosystem that prioritizes a broader diversity of perspectives and experience.”¹⁵³ He said GAC should adopt a “get out to go up” principle where employees would be encouraged to move between the public, not-for-profit and private sectors potentially several times over the course of their career.

John Barrett, a retired Canadian ambassador, offered a similar perspective in a brief which contends that GAC lacks a systematic approach for its employees – and specifically, foreign service officers – to temporarily assume positions in the private sector. Mr. Barrett listed several possible benefits associated with private sector assignment opportunities, including increasing GAC’s knowledge of issues and concerns relevant to Canadian industry, and improving the private sector’s understanding of government machinery and policies.¹⁵⁴ Mr. Barrett recommended that GAC embed the option of private sector deployment in the career management path of its personnel. He specified that the department should make it clear that personnel would not harm their careers by taking such external appointments. Instead, he argued that such a deployment “should be recognized as an important step in acquiring leadership skills, policy expertise and management experience that will improve their contribution to the department.”

GAC’s future of diplomacy discussion paper said that for “too long, Global Affairs Canada has kept its circle of trusted partners a small one; the department should become ‘open by default.’”¹⁵⁵ To do so, the paper indicated that GAC should seek new partnerships and become “open to the breadth and wealth of globally minded expertise and international experience available, including at universities and think tanks in Canada and abroad, diaspora populations, in other federal government departments and at other levels of government.”¹⁵⁶

The committee agrees and wishes to emphasize that external engagement must be a two-way street. GAC should also become more accessible to employees from other government

¹⁵² AEFA, *Evidence*, September 28, 2022 (Marissa Fortune).

¹⁵³ Andrew McLaughlin, *Brief* submitted to the committee, April 2022.

¹⁵⁴ John Barrett, *Brief* submitted to the committee, June 2023.

¹⁵⁵ GAC, *Future of Diplomacy: Transforming Global Affairs Canada*, Discussion Paper, June 2023, p. 14.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

departments, as well as to individuals working outside of government. The committee believes that emphasizing the value of employee exchanges is a message that should come from the top of GAC. As head of the Canadian public service, the Clerk of the Privy Council can play an important role in encouraging employee interchanges among federal departments. Given the increasing confluence of foreign policy and domestic issues, the committee urges GAC to realize the objective of creating a more open and accessible department.

Recommendation 20

The Clerk of the Privy Council should issue a directive to Deputy Ministers, Heads of Separate Agencies, and Heads of Federal Agencies calling on them to encourage Canadian federal public servants to pursue secondments, interchanges and other forms of temporary assignments in and out of the federal public service, including, as appropriate, with other government departments and agencies, private sector companies, multilateral bodies, educational institutions and civil society organizations.

Recommendation 21

As part of its career management framework, senior management at Global Affairs Canada should emphasize that horizontal movement by employees in and out of the department is valued and recognized with regard to career progression, including promotions and postings abroad.

Local Leadership and Empowerment

During its fact-finding missions, the committee heard information about issues specific to the career management of Canada's LES. As this report has indicated, LES make up the majority of GAC's overseas staff and are critical to the successful functioning of Canadian missions abroad. Importantly, many LES remain in their posts for long periods of time, which provides continuity at mission, as well as institutional memory that can be conveyed to CBS who rotate into post.

Many of the issues and concerns raised by CBS about career management were also mentioned by LES. The committee heard, for example, about a lack of structured career planning for LES at Canadian missions abroad. This includes insufficient attention to LES training, not only around the time of hiring, but also on an ongoing career basis. While it appears that some LES are offered official language training, the committee heard that this training is not offered systemically and is commonly left up to the discretion of individual managers.

The committee also heard concerns about a lack of career development opportunities for LES. This concern appears to be particularly common among LES who have worked at a mission for a long period of time. Several LES indicated that they had been at the top of their salary scale for many years and lacked opportunities for further promotion. The committee also heard about a lack of leadership and management opportunities for LES. One LES indicated that it is not uncommon for newly posted CBS to manage a team at mission, while long serving LES lack

the same opportunities. The committee also heard there were missed opportunities for LES to provide mentorship at mission, not just to other LES, but also to newly arrived CBS.

Various other employment issues came to light during the committee's roundtables with LES at Canadian missions abroad. For example, the committee heard that many LES would like more opportunities to engage with colleagues in other missions as well as at headquarters in Ottawa. The committee also heard from some Canadian LES that they would like an opportunity to qualify for internal competitions that would allow them to work elsewhere in GAC. The committee believes that GAC should examine these ideas and ensure that its LES are properly supported by a career management framework.

Recommendation 22

Global Affairs Canada should recognize the value and contributions of locally engaged staff to the work of the department by providing them with greater training, interchange and leadership opportunities as well as ways of contributing to the work of the wider department.

Conditions of Foreign Service

One of the aspects that make[s] the Foreign Service different and more difficult is that it involves a far more intimate relationship with families. Global Affairs [Canada] has made significant progress since the McDougall report, but family continues to be the key reason why officers leave a posting early or even leave the Foreign Service.”¹⁵⁷

Central to the conditions of foreign service are the Foreign Service Directives (FSDs), a package of allowances and benefits for CBS serving abroad.¹⁵⁸ The committee heard a great deal about the need to thoroughly modernize the FSDs and simplify the current administrative processes, which are sometimes frustrating and time-consuming for CBS posted to missions.

Although the FSDs are updated every three years, they have not kept up with the challenges of modern society.¹⁵⁹ The future of diplomacy discussion paper states that the FSDs are “in profound need of a revamp” and that GAC intends to “advocate strongly for FSD modernization” in the bargaining round scheduled for fall 2023.¹⁶⁰ This bargaining is being

¹⁵⁷ AEFA, *Evidence*, June 16, 2022 (Patricia Fortier).

¹⁵⁸ AEFA, *Evidence*, June 8, 2023 (David Morrison).

¹⁵⁹ AEFA, *Evidence*, April 19, 2023 (Stewart Wheeler).

¹⁶⁰ GAC, *Future of Diplomacy: Transforming Global Affairs Canada – Discussion paper*, June 2023.

conducted by union and employer representatives on the National Joint Council (NJC).¹⁶¹ Jean-Yves Dionne, a former foreign service officer, recommends “moderniz[ing] the National Joint Council (NJC) to better reflect the working conditions of FS officers and their families.” He believes that in the NJC’s current form, the voice of foreign service officers, represented by PAFSO, is diluted by other unions.¹⁶²

The committee heard that modernized FSDs must recognize that the composition and reality of Canadian families have changed dramatically in recent decades. In a brief submitted to the committee, PAFSO points out that the foreign service is a microcosm of Canadian society; some foreign service officers are married, others are single or divorced, and more than half have children.¹⁶³ In some cases, a “family” extends beyond spouses and children. For example, Ayesha Rekhi raised the example of families of diplomats of Asian origin, who find it difficult to have their aging parents remain with them when posted abroad, since they are not included in the FSDs. The same applies to children who may have left the home and subsequently return.¹⁶⁴ During its fact-finding missions, the committee learned that blended families posted abroad can also face obstacles due to the definition of family in the FSDs. In addition, the committee was made aware of the fact that people deployed as single or unaccompanied are sometimes considered less of a priority when preparing deployments, including the assignment of residences.

The second recurring theme surrounding FSD modernization concerns the support available to spouses accompanying CBS posted abroad, particularly with regard to employment. This affects both men and women.¹⁶⁵ During its fact-finding missions, the committee had the privilege of meeting with a number of Canadian diplomats who candidly shared the challenge of maintaining a satisfying career for the accompanying spouse. The committee heard about multiple scenarios and met with employees whose partners put their careers on hold, couples where one partner actively sought a career that would allow both partners to be posted to the same mission, couples where one partner works remotely for the Canadian government, either full-time or for part of the year, and dual-service couples where one partner adjusted their career plan to facilitate postings to the same mission. The issue of spousal employment was also discussed with officials from the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom and Norway, who are also grappling with these issues, without having found a universal and effective way to address them.

Sandra McCardell spoke about GAC’s efforts to facilitate access to employment opportunities for spouses, while acknowledging that much work remains to be done. In a brief submitted to the committee, PAFSO encourages the adoption of innovative practices to provide more

¹⁶¹ Employer and employee representatives belong to the National Joint Council (NJC), which negotiates numerous public service directives and policies, including the Foreign Service Directives. For details about the NJC composition, see [NJC Membership](#).

¹⁶² Jean-Yves Dionne, [Brief](#) submitted to the committee, April 7, 2022.

¹⁶³ PAFSO, [Brief](#) submitted to the committee, September 2023.

¹⁶⁴ AEFA, [Evidence](#), April 19, 2023 (Ayesha Rekhi).

¹⁶⁵ AEFA, [Evidence](#), April 19, 2023 (Sandra McCardell).

options and support for spousal employment. PAFSO's suggestions include job-sharing for qualified dual-service couples, support for telework, allowances for accompanying spouses and "pension eligibility."¹⁶⁶

FSD modernization must also address how the directives are administered. The reams of red tape involved with the FSDs were raised by the CBS with whom the committee met during its fact-finding missions. PAFSO raises the same concerns in its brief. It notes a deterioration in the support provided to posted employees, particularly due to understaffing and turnover within the division responsible for managing the FSDs.¹⁶⁷

In addition to calling for more support in the application of the FSDs, the committee heard some of the challenges faced by GAC employees who, for various reasons including the special needs of a family member, would request case-by-case accommodations in the application of the FSDs. Vikas Sharma related inconsistent experiences with "Working Group B,"¹⁶⁸ from which employees, for each posting, must request accommodation in the FSDs. Mr. Sharma said that some employees "feel that it's just not worth it to go through that fight every time." He suggested looking at the reasons why these employees have to prove the same things more than once in order to meet the FSD requirements.¹⁶⁹

The committee supports the witnesses' recommendations, which are also reflected in GAC's objectives to modernize the FSDs and provide more support to families posted abroad. The committee therefore makes the following recommendations.

Recommendation 23

The Government of Canada should undertake a complete modernization of the Foreign Service Directives to ensure that they are adapted to the current and evolving realities faced by Canada's public servants and their families, including with regard to issues related to diversity, inclusion and accessibility. In particular, the Foreign Service Directives should recognize the diversity of family composition, including the realities of single and/or unaccompanied individuals. The modernization of the Foreign Service Directives should also aim to simplify administrative procedures and remove excessive administrative requirements.

¹⁶⁶ PAFSO, [Brief](#) submitted to the committee, September 2023.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ According to the [National Joint Council](#), Working Group B is a "forum for interdepartmental consultation by departmental representatives on the interpretation and application of the [Foreign Service Directives]." Working Group B's objectives are: to ensure consistent interdepartmental interpretation and application of the FSDs; to discuss and recommend possible solutions to specific concerns and issues on the FSDs on a case-by-case basis; and to provide departmental FSD administrators a venue to exchange information.

¹⁶⁹ AEFA, [Evidence](#), April 19, 2023 (Vikas Sharma).

Recommendation 24

Global Affairs Canada should dedicate additional human and financial resources to improve ongoing support to personnel posted abroad, including by identifying ways to facilitate employment of any accompanying spouse or partner.

Recommendation 25

The Government of Canada should review the Foreign Service Directives to ensure that they reflect the realities of personnel and family members living with a disability or special needs. It should also reduce the administrative burden imposed on personnel seeking accommodation from Working Group B with regard to a disability or a special needs case.

Duty of Care

Marta Morgan told the committee that GAC has been investing new resources since 2017 to enable the department to fulfill its obligations to mitigate the risks inherent in overseas service to its CBS and their families; these obligations form the duty of care.¹⁷⁰ Ben Rowswell, then President and Research Director, Canadian International Council, explained that the duty of care involves a decision-making process that seeks to determine “if the risks outweigh the benefits.”¹⁷¹ He noted that implementation of this “doctrine” may have contributed to the lack of a Canadian diplomatic presence in some global hot spots. While supporting the need for such a decision-making process, he urged Canada to maintain at least a few diplomats posted in hot spots, if only to have eyes and ears on the ground and not just rely on information from Canada’s allies.¹⁷²

Minister Joly presented the committee with the changes that the Government of Canada intends to make to the duty of care owed to LES. Although Canada’s obligations toward LES are not the same as those toward CBS, GAC has decided to modify its approach toward LES in times of crisis, and to provide them with the option of evacuating the country. Minister Joly pointed out that this decision was based on the experience of evacuations in Ukraine and Sudan; Canada has evacuated some LES in Poland and Kenya.¹⁷³ Cindy Termorshuizen, Associate Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, GAC, said that Canada had also continued to pay LES following the suspension of operations at the Canadian Embassy in Kyiv.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁰ AEFA, *Evidence*, June 9, 2022 (Marta Morgan).

¹⁷¹ AEFA, *Evidence*, April 7, 2022 (Ben Rowswell).

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ AEFA, *Evidence*, June 8, 2023 (Hon. Mélanie Joly).

¹⁷⁴ AEFA, *Evidence*, June 9, 2022 (Cindy Termorshuizen).

The committee supports GAC's objective, which it articulated in the *Transformation Implementation Plan 2023-2026*, of developing a policy on the protection and care of LES, particularly in times of crisis.

More Foreign, Less Office?

Several witnesses voiced support for increasing the number of Canadian diplomats posted abroad. To have influence, the committee heard, Canada needs to be at the tables where negotiations are occurring and decisions are being made. Yet, the committee heard that the balance between CBS serving abroad versus headquarters is skewed in the wrong direction, with GAC being described as headquarters heavy. As noted earlier in the report, approximately 19% of all CBS were serving abroad in 2022.¹⁷⁵ Michael Small pointed out that the U.K.'s 2016 *Future FCO* report used the expression "more foreign, less office" to describe the ministry's plan to deploy more U.K. diplomats abroad.¹⁷⁶ However, according to Mr. Small, Canada has "opted for the reverse: less foreign, more office." According to Mr. Small, "[t]hat mindset needs to change."¹⁷⁷

The Canadian Foreign Service Alumni Forum wrote in its brief that a reduction in program funds, combined with an expansion in obligations, has left Canada's diplomatic network abroad overstretched and under resourced. The brief indicates that Canada has a "large number of 'small' or 'micro missions,' some with no Canadians, or with one or two Canadian staff members." According to the brief, these missions "exist to show the Canadian flag, but are so thinly staffed and poorly supported that they are incapable of meeting anything but minimal obligations. Much of Canada's diplomatic presence is a Potemkin village."¹⁷⁸

Despite calls to increase the number of CBS posted abroad, no witness was able to put a number on either what proportion or actual number of CBS should serve abroad versus in Ottawa. The fact is that it is not possible to determine the precise threshold for diplomatic presence abroad above which one would expect to see a measurable impact. Moreover, it bears underlining that GAC also requires seasoned diplomatic professionals at headquarters in Ottawa. In speaking about the balance of GAC staff abroad and at headquarters, Morris Rosenberg told the committee:

¹⁷⁵ This figure includes 1,070 rotational employees (foreign service officers), as well as 216 CBS in other employment groups serving abroad out of a total CBS staff of 7,723. See: GAC, *Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Minister of International Development, Deputy Minister of International Trade, and Associate Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs before the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade (AEFA)*, June 9, 2022.

¹⁷⁶ In March 2023, the FCDO had over 17,000 employees of whom 7,600 were categorized as "U.K.-based staff" (U.K. civil servants) and 9,430 were listed as "country-based staff" (locally engaged employees). As of March 31, 2023, 72% of U.K.-based staff were working in the U.K. and 28% were posted overseas. U.K., Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), *Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23*, 2023, p. 140. See also: U.K., FCO, *Future FCO*, May 9, 2016.

¹⁷⁷ AEFA, *Evidence*, April 7, 2022 (Michael Small).

¹⁷⁸ Canadian Foreign Service Alumni Forum, *Brief* submitted to the committee, November 17, 2022.

I do not think it is necessary to choose one or the other of the two. Rather, we should be asking what we need in order for Global Affairs to be effective and meet the needs of the country and the government. I do not think we can simply reduce staff at headquarters and send them abroad or vice versa. We have to see it as a whole and have enough staff for both roles at the same time.¹⁷⁹

Pierre Guimond explained that one of the foundations of “rotationality” is that foreign service officers have to perform both missions. He said, “they have to be at headquarters in Ottawa to contribute to policy development, and then they have to go out in the field to put into practice the policies developed at the department.”¹⁸⁰ In other words, as Margaret Biggs told the committee, GAC also needs a “robust home game.”¹⁸¹

Decisions about the number of diplomats to post abroad unavoidably run up against fiscal realities. GAC indicates that overseas positions “can cost significantly more” than positions in Canada.¹⁸² According to the department, the “average common services costs” per CBS position is \$165,000.¹⁸³ However, the actual cost of a CBS position abroad is higher because this figure does not include foreign service directive allowances, employee benefit plans and salary. During its fact-finding missions, the committee heard that other foreign ministries are also struggling with the costs associated with posting their diplomats abroad, particularly in a context of high inflation globally.

During its fact-finding missions abroad, the committee heard about how other foreign ministries are considering ways in which new digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence, could be leveraged to improve service delivery and reduce administrative costs at overseas missions. Of course, the COVID-19 pandemic also forced foreign ministries worldwide to modernize their technological systems and infrastructure and to make better use of digital and virtual diplomacy tools. The committee believes that GAC should consider its presence abroad in the context of evolving technological modernization and should explore how modern forms of communication can be used to enhance cost efficiency.

While the committee would like to see more Canadian diplomats deployed abroad, both in actual numbers and as a percentage of total CBS, it understands that GAC cannot avoid current fiscal realities. For this reason, the committee is not prepared to recommend an exact figure

¹⁷⁹ AEFA, *Evidence*, June 16, 2022 (Morris Rosenberg).

¹⁸⁰ AEFA, *Evidence*, April 7, 2022 (Pierre Guimond).

¹⁸¹ AEFA, *Evidence*, April 7, 2022 (Margaret Biggs).

¹⁸² GAC, *Future of Diplomacy: Transforming Global Affairs Canada*, Discussion Paper, June 2023, p. 22.

¹⁸³ GAC indicates that this cost is broken down by the provision of seven common services: human resource management, foreign service directive administration, transportation, security, information management and information technology, program delivery support, and property and material. GAC, *Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Minister of International Development, Deputy Minister of International Trade, and Associate Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs before the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade (AEFA)*, June 9, 2022.

for the proportion of CBS – or foreign service officers, more specifically – who should be posted abroad versus at headquarters. Instead, the committee urges GAC to regularly review its overseas presence to ensure Canada's diplomatic representation is fit for purpose and aligned with Canadian foreign policy priorities. GAC's *Transformation Implementation Plan 2023-2026* outlines mechanisms for adjusting Canada's presence abroad, such as providing the Minister of Foreign Affairs with options for adjusting Canada's presence abroad, including in G20 locations and other strategic locations. The committee urges the department to make use of these mechanisms to ensure a strong Canadian diplomatic presence abroad.

Finally, the committee believes that GAC should recognize the role that non-rotational CBS play to support Canadian missions abroad. During its fact-finding visits, the committee met with a number of experienced non-rotational CBS who are performing roles similar to foreign service officers and contribute significant subject-matter expertise to the work of Canadian missions. However, some non-rotational CBS referred to the application process for overseas postings as overly complicated for their employee group, which the committee heard deters many qualified applicants from pursuing postings. As part of the department's work to recalibrate Canada's diplomatic presence abroad, the committee urges GAC to consider how non-rotational CBS can be better deployed in support of Canadian foreign policy priorities.

Recommendation 26

Global Affairs Canada should establish a pathway for integrating non-rotational Canada-based staff into the Canadian foreign service, and the department should improve the process for non-rotational subject-matter experts to apply for overseas postings.

Organizational Changes

The committee also heard from witnesses about potential organizational changes that GAC could implement as part of its transformational exercise. During his testimony, David Morrison noted that while no organizational changes had been announced to date, GAC was aware that some are needed in the future. He added that the department had chosen to focus first on "cultural changes."¹⁸⁴ This section presents information on organizational changes, in particular the status of "separate agency" and of "central agency."

Separate Agency

During her appearance before the committee, retired ambassador Doreen Steidle strongly encouraged GAC to take advantage of "every creative authority it can to redesign our organizational structure with a corresponding HR management regime."¹⁸⁵ Ms. Steidle believes

¹⁸⁴ AEFA, *Evidence*, June 8, 2023 (David Morrison).

¹⁸⁵ AEFA, *Evidence*, November 30, 2022 (Doreen Steidle).

that GAC should use this pivotal moment to ensure that the future of diplomacy initiative is truly transformational for GAC in order to avoid having the same issues to deal with 10 years from now. She said that for many years GAC has been grafting, adding, subtracting and reclassifying employee groups. She wondered whether GAC might benefit from a blank canvas as it considers its future. She recommended examining the operations of separate agencies.

Separate agency status is usually conferred to a government entity that must establish a human resources management regime separate from Treasury Board frameworks to meet “particular operational needs.” Allen Sutherland, Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet, Machinery of Government and Democratic Institutions, Privy Council Office, used the example of operational requirements related to national security, or the need to set terms and conditions of employment to attract a “highly technical or specialized workforce.”¹⁸⁶

The decision to change the organizational structure of a government entity is made on a case-by-case basis and is the prerogative of the prime minister. Mr. Sutherland outlined several factors that could be considered in this decision, including its impact on the rest of the federal government. The decision will also have to ensure that the desired result cannot be achieved without changing the machinery of government. Marie-Chantal Girard, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Employee Relations and Total Compensation, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, said that the government is trying to implement organizational models that allow for a certain degree of freedom, or room to manoeuvre, to reflect the fact that each organization is unique.¹⁸⁷ Mr. Sutherland acknowledged that change in the machinery of government is potentially transformative and invariably disruptive, involving significant trade-offs and transaction costs, particularly in terms of time.¹⁸⁸

According to GAC’s discussion paper on the future of diplomacy, the department will also explore its human resources management options, including the possibility of obtaining separate agency status. The committee encourages GAC to ensure that the future of diplomacy initiative is truly transformational, and it makes the following recommendation.

Recommendation 27

The Government of Canada should examine the possibility of seeking separate agency status for Global Affairs Canada. This examination should consider how separate agency status could allow Global Affairs Canada to restructure the department and redesign its human resource regime while also maintaining a capacity for interdepartmental mobility. It should also include an evaluation of lessons learned from the creation of separate agencies within the Government of Canada.

¹⁸⁶ AEFA, *Evidence*, November 30, 2022 (Allen Sutherland).

¹⁸⁷ AEFA, *Evidence*, November 30, 2022 (Marie-Chantal Girard).

¹⁸⁸ AEFA, *Evidence*, November 30, 2022 (Allen Sutherland).

Central Agency

The term “central agency” is generally used to designate an entity that has a central coordinating role across government departments to ensure policy coherence as well as to provide advice to the prime minister.¹⁸⁹ Margaret Biggs reflected on the role that GAC could play within the Government of Canada to help Canada respond to an increasingly complex world. She said, “given how ubiquitous global issues are and how domestic and global issues are so intertwined, how global issues transcend boundaries, I do believe that Global Affairs Canada needs to situate itself and be seen as essentially a central agency.”¹⁹⁰ Ian Shugart told the committee that GAC is already – to some extent – a central agency. He explained that in his previous role as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, he “didn’t wait for the Privy Council Office to establish machinery or mechanisms [in preparation for the outcome of the 2016 U.S. presidential election].” He added that the department “pulled together, both at the ministerial level and senior officials, using the coordination of the department itself.”¹⁹¹ The committee agrees with these points of view and makes the following recommendation.

Recommendation 28

The Government of Canada should affirm Global Affairs Canada as a central agency with responsibility for coordinating Canada’s approach to international policy files across the federal government.

Finally, with the objective of supporting the government in the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report, the committee makes the following recommendation.

Recommendation 29

Global Affairs Canada should establish an advisory group to assist with the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report. The advisory group should include internal and external representatives, including current and former Global Affairs Canada employees, as well as parliamentarians, academics, and civil society representatives.

¹⁸⁹ Alex Smith, *The Roles and Responsibilities of Central Agencies*, Library of Parliament, Publication no. 2009-01-E, revised April 22, 2015.

¹⁹⁰ AEFA, *Evidence*, April 7, 2022 (Margaret Biggs).

¹⁹¹ AEFA, *Evidence*, June 16, 2022 (Ian Shugart).

Conclusion

The study of Canadian diplomacy and GAC's foreign policy machinery took place during a period of profound geopolitical upheaval. The need for flexible diplomacy is all the more pressing given the growing complexity of foreign policy issues and the sharp increase in crises and emergencies across the globe. Witnesses stressed that, now more than ever, diplomacy remains Canada's first line of defense.

In order to pull back the curtain on how diplomacy works, the report examines the scope of Canada's representation abroad and the mandate of many federal entities in carrying out Canada's priorities abroad. It also explains the roles of various employee groups within the diplomatic machinery and the conditions under which they work.

Witnesses spoke of the need to modernize foreign service operations so Canada is better able to respond to emerging challenges. The report makes recommendations for recruiting a workforce representative of Canada's diversity in all its forms. It also suggests improving the career management of GAC employees specifically to develop a pool of diverse expertise within the department. The report also calls for a thorough modernization of the Foreign Service Directives to ensure that they reflect the reality of GAC employees and their families.

Lastly, the report supports many of GAC's objectives outlined in its modernization initiative, which was conducted concurrently with the committee's study. The committee trusts that the recommendations in this report will help guide GAC's modernization initiative over the coming years.

APPENDIX A – Global Affairs Canada's Expenditures and Employment

Global Affairs Canada Expenditures by Core Responsibility

The following table presents Global Affairs Canada's (GAC) expenditures by core responsibility for the last five fiscal years. GAC's overall expenditure increased by about 30% – or \$2.19 billion – between 2018-2019 and 2022-2023. The table shows that most of GAC's annual expenditure – between 62% and 71% – was allocated to Development, Peace and Security programming. This core responsibility has also received the largest share of the funding increases allocated to GAC over the last five fiscal years.

The proportion of GAC's expenditures for the other core responsibilities for the past five years were as follows:

- between 10% and 13% for International Advocacy and Diplomacy;
- between 3.5% and 4.6% for Trade and Investment;
- between 10% and 16% for Support for Canada's Presence Abroad;¹⁹²
- between 0.6% and 1.4% for Help for Canadians Abroad; and
- between 3.4% and 3.8% for Internal Services.¹⁹³

¹⁹² [Support for Canada's Presence Abroad](#) relates to the management and delivery of "resources, infrastructure and services enabling Canada's presence abroad, including at embassies, high commissions and consulates." For example, this program includes expenditure on Client Relations and Missions Operation, Foreign Service Directives and Real Property Planning and Stewardship.

¹⁹³ [Internal Services](#) comprises 10 services, including Communication Services, Financial Management Services, Human Resources Management Services, Information Technology Services and Management and Oversight Services.

Table 1. Global Affairs Canada expenditures by core responsibility, in millions of dollars and by fiscal year

Core Responsibilities	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Development, Peace and Security programming	4,430	4,490	6,680	5,430	6,412
International Advocacy and Diplomacy	966	942	899	870	931
Trade and Investment	320	351	332	343	362
Support for Canada's Presence Abroad	1,040	1,050	982	1,060	1,143
Help for Canadians Abroad	57	76	135	55	59
Internal Services	247	268	317	311	347
Total	7,060	7,178	9,346	8,069	9,254

Source: Table prepared by the Library of Parliament with data from Government of Canada, "[Infographic for Development, Peace and Security Programming](#)," InfoBase, Databased, accessed October 30, 2023; "[Infographic for International Advocacy and Diplomacy](#)," InfoBase, Databased, accessed October 30, 2023; "[Infographic for Trade and Investment](#)," InfoBase, Databased, accessed October 30, 2023; "[Infographic for Support for Canada's Presence Abroad](#)," InfoBase, Databased, accessed October 30, 2023; "[Infographic for Help for Canadians Abroad](#)," InfoBase, Databased, accessed October 30, 2023; "[Infographic for Internal Services](#)," InfoBase, Databased, accessed October 30, 2023; "[Section 10 : Core responsibilities](#)," Public Accounts of Canada 2023, Volume II.

Global Affairs Canada Employment by Core Responsibility

Table 2 presents the number of full-time equivalents (FTEs) for each of GAC's core responsibilities for fiscal years 2018-2019 to 2021-2022. Over that period, there was a 5% increase in the total number of FTEs at GAC. The core responsibility to receive the most FTEs annually over the 2018-2019 to 2021-2022 period – between 36% and 38% – was Support for Canada's Presence Abroad.

The proportion of FTEs allocated to other core responsibilities annually over the 2018-2019 to 2021-2022 period was as follows:

- approximately 9% of FTEs were allocated to the Development, Peace and Security programming;
- approximately 19% of FTEs were allocated to the International Advocacy and Diplomacy;
- approximately 17% of the FTEs were allocated to the Trade and Investment;
- approximately 3% of the FTEs were allocated to the Help for Canadians Abroad; and
- between 13% and 15% of FTEs were allocated to Internal Services.

Table 2. Global Affairs Canada's full-time equivalents, by core responsibility and by fiscal year

Core Responsibilities	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Development, Peace and Security Programming	1,012	1,097	1,134	1,127
International Advocacy and Diplomacy	2,414	2,319	2,342	2,369
Trade and Investment	1,899	2,038	2,077	2,057
Support for Canada's Presence Abroad	4,471	4,482	4,345	4,530
Help for Canadians Abroad	371	398	405	403
Internal Services	1,512	1,824	1,873	1,823
Total	11,679	12,158	12,176	12,309

Source: Table prepared by the Library of Parliament with data from Government of Canada, "[Infographic for Development, Peace and Security Programming](#)," InfoBase, Databased, accessed October 30, 2023; "[Infographic for International Advocacy and Diplomacy](#)," InfoBase, Databased, accessed October 30, 2023; "[Infographic for Trade and Investment](#)," InfoBase, Databased, accessed October 30, 2023; "[Infographic for Support for Canada's Presence Abroad](#)," InfoBase, Databased, accessed October 30, 2023; "[Infographic for Help for Canadians Abroad](#)," InfoBase, Databased, accessed October 30, 2023; "[Infographic for Internal Services](#)," InfoBase, Databased, accessed October 30, 2023.

APPENDIX B: WITNESSES

Thursday, June 8, 2023

The Honourable Mélanie Joly, P.C., M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Global Affairs Canada:

David Morrison, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs;

Alexandre Lévêque, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy;

Vera Alexander, Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources;

Stéphane Cousineau, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, People and International Platform;

Anick Ouellette, Assistant Deputy Minister and Chief Financial Officer, Corporate Planning, Finance and Information Technology and Chief Financial Officer.

Thursday, April 20, 2023

As an individual:

The Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, P.C., Former Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Wednesday, April 19, 2023

Global Affairs Canada:

Sandra McCardell, Assistant Deputy Minister, Europe, Arctic, Middle East and Maghreb and Champion of the Women Network (by videoconference);

Ayesha Rekhi, Ambassador to the Czech Republic and Champion for the Visible Minorities Network (by videoconference);

Vikas Sharma, Executive Director, Andean Region Division and Champion for the Persons with Disabilities Network;

Stewart Wheeler, Chief of Protocol of Canada and Director General of the Summits Management Office and Champion of the 2SLGBTQI+ Network.

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

As an individual:

The Right Honourable Joe Clark, P.C., Former Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Thursday, March 9, 2023

As an individual:

The Honourable John Baird, P.C., Former Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Thursday, December 15, 2022

The Honourable Mary Ng, P.C., M.P., Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development.

Global Affairs Canada:

Alexandre Lévêque, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy;

Sara Wilshaw, Chief Trade Commissioner, International Business Development, Investment and Innovation;

Bruce Christie, Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, Trade Policy and Negotiations.

Wednesday, November 30, 2022

Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces:

Major-General Blaise Frawley, Deputy Vice Chief of the Defence Staff;

Major-General Greg Smith, Director General International Security Policy, Assistant Deputy Minister (Policy).

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat:

Marie-Chantal Girard, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Employee Relations and Total Compensation;

Simon Crabtree, Executive Director of Pension Policy, Programs and Total Compensation, Employee Relations and Total Compensation Sector (by videoconference);

Aline Taillefer-McLaren, Senior Director of the Union Engagement and the National Joint Council Support, Employee Relations and Total Compensation Sector.

Privy Council Office:

Allen Sutherland, Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet, Machinery of Government and Democratic Institutions.

As an individual:

Doreen Steidle, Ambassador (retired).

Thursday, November 3, 2022

The Honourable Harjit S. Sajjan, P.C., M.P., Minister of International Development.

Global Affairs Canada:

Christopher MacLennan, Deputy Minister, International Development;

Alexandre Lévêque, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy;

Vera Alexander, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources.

Thursday, October 20, 2022

As individuals:

Roland Paris, Full Professor and Director, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa.

Adam Chapnick, Professor of Defence Studies, Canadian Forces College.

Wednesday, October 19, 2022

Environment and Climate Change Canada:

Stephen de Boer, Assistant Deputy Minister, International Affairs Branch;

Jeanne-Marie Huddleston, Director General, Bilateral Affairs and Trade;

Catherine Stewart, Ambassador for Climate Change.

Canada Border Services Agency:

Natasha Manji, Director General, International Policy and Partnerships Directorate.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada:

Kathleen Donohue, Assistant Deputy Minister and Vice-President, International Affairs Branch;

Marie-Noëlle Desrochers, Acting Chief Agriculture Negotiator and Director General, Trade Agreements and Negotiations.

Canadian Food Inspection Agency:

Nathalie Durand, Executive Director, Horizontal and Strategic Initiatives.

Thursday, October 6, 2022

Canadian Security Intelligence Service:

Newton Shortliffe, Acting Deputy Director, Operations.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police:

Liam Price, Director General, International Special Services.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada:

Pemi Gill, Director General, International Network;

Karim Virani, Director General, Integrated Planning and Coordination.

Wednesday, September 28, 2022

Global Affairs Canada's Young Professionals Network:

Marissa Fortune, Project Lead YPN Vision 2030, Analyst, Future of Diplomacy Project;

Julien Labrosse, Member, Visits Officer, Office of Protocol;

Sejal Tiwari, Co-Representative, Development Officer.

Wednesday, June 16, 2022

As individuals:

Morris Rosenberg, Former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs;

Ian Shugart, Former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Former Clerk of the Privy Council;

Patricia Fortier, Senior Fellow, Graduate School of International Affairs, University of Ottawa;

Colin Robertson, Vice-President and Fellow, Canadian Global Affairs Institute;

Randolph Mank, Fellow, Canadian Global Affairs Institute and Balsillie School of International Affairs.

Thursday, June 9, 2022

Global Affairs Canada:

Marta Morgan, Deputy Minister, Foreign Affairs;

David Morrison, Deputy Minister, International Trade;

Christopher MacLennan, Deputy Minister, International Development;

Cindy Termorshuizen, Associate Deputy Minister, Foreign Affairs;

Alexandre Lévêque, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy;

Francis Trudel, Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources;

Annie Boyer, Director General, Financial Planning and Management and Deputy Chief Financial Officer;

Stéphane Cousineau, Assistant Deputy Minister, International Platform Branch.

Thursday, April 28, 2022

As individuals:

Abbie Dann, Member of the Board of Directors, Canadian Executive Service Organization (CESO);

Gilles Rivard, Fellow, Montreal Institute of International Studies;

Len Edwards, former deputy minister of international trade, foreign affairs.

Thursday, April 7, 2022

Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers:

Pamela Isfeld, President.

Canadian Ambassadors Alumni Association:

Michael Small, President.

Canadian International Council:

Ben Rowsell, President and Research Director.

As individuals:

Daniel Livermore, Honorary Senior Fellow, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa;

Margaret Biggs, Matthews Fellow in Global Public Policy, Queen's University;

Pierre Guimond, Senior Fellow, Graduate School of International Studies, Laval University.

APPENDIX C: Fact-Finding Missions

Washington, D.C., United States

Monday, December 5, 2022

- Canada Institute, Woodrow Wilson Center
- Modernization Team, Department of State
- Foreign Service Institute
- Senator Mike Rounds, United States Senate
- Kirsten Hillman, Ambassador of Canada to the United States
- Senior Officials from Global Affairs Canada, Embassy of Canada in the United States

Tuesday, December 6, 2022

- Canada-Based Staff, Global Affairs Canada, Embassy of Canada in the United States
- Locally Engaged Staff, Global Affairs Canada, Embassy of Canada in the United States
- Senator Bob Menendez, Chairman, United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
- Senator Benjamin L. Cardin, Chair of the Subcommittee on State Department & USAID Management, International Operations, & Bilateral International Development
- Senator Bill Hagerty, Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on State Department & USAID Management, International Operations, & Bilateral International Development

Ottawa, ON, Canada

Thursday, March 23, 2023

- Emergency Watch and Response Centre, Global Affairs Canada
- Senior Officials, Global Affairs Canada

London, United Kingdom

Monday, September 11, 2023

- The Honourable Ralph Goodale, High Commissioner for Canada to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

- Senior Officials from Global Affairs Canada, High Commission of Canada in the United Kingdom
- Canada-Based Staff, Global Affairs Canada, High Commission of Canada in the United Kingdom
- Locally Engaged Staff, Global Affairs Canada, High Commission in the United Kingdom
- Alicia Kearns, MP, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, House of Commons
- Overseas Development Institute

Tuesday, September 12, 2023

- Senior Officials from Global Affairs Canada, Embassy of Canada in the United Kingdom
- Lord Simon Gerard McDonald, GCMG, KCVO, Former Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- Nick Dyer, Second Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)

Oslo, Norway

Wednesday, September 13, 2023

- Amy Baker, Ambassador Designate, Embassy of Canada in Norway
- Senior Official from Global Affairs Canada, Embassy of Canada in Norway
- Nils Bjørke, Deputy Speaker, Storting of Norway
- Members of the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, Storting of Norway
- Delegation of members for the Arctic Parliamentary Cooperation, Storting of Norway
- Torgeir Larsen, Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway
- Canada-Based Staff, Global Affairs Canada, Embassy of Canada in Norway
- Locally Engaged Staff, Global Affairs Canada, Embassy of Canada in Norway
- Innovation Norway
- Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)
- Fridtjof Nansen Institute

Berlin, Germany

Thursday, September 14, 2023

- Jörg Kukies, State Secretary, Federal Chancellery

- Michael Roth, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Bundestag
- Thomas Bagger, State Secretary, Foreign Office

Friday, September 15, 2023

- Global Public Policy Institute
- German Institute for International and Security Affairs
- Hertie School of Governance
- Central Services Officials, Federal Foreign Office
- Senior Officials from Global Affairs Canada, Embassy of Canada in Germany
- Canada-Based Staff, Global Affairs Canada, Embassy of Canada in Germany
- Locally Engaged Staff, Global Affairs Canada, Embassy of Canada in Germany



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