

to study, to work or to visit Canada. In 1985, a total of 72,810 immigrants and 297,302 visitors were issued visas overseas.

Another responsibility of visa officers is to maintain links with host government officials in order to provide Canadian federal government agencies with a variety of information on social affairs topics such as labour market developments, youth employment, affirmative action, women's issues and social welfare programs as well as the immigration and refugee policies of their countries of accreditation.

Large numbers of Canadians travel and reside in other countries. Through its diplomatic and consular missions, the department serves their needs for passports, citizenship documents and notarial services, and gives advice and assistance on a wide range of Canadian and foreign matters. It also helps Canadians who find themselves in distress while abroad, whether through loss of money and travel documents, arrest and imprisonment, illness or death, civil disturbances, natural disasters, or other troubles.

Passport services. Passports are issued to Canadian citizens through the main passport office in Ottawa and through regional offices in St. John's, Halifax, Fredericton, Montreal, Quebec City, Toronto downtown and Toronto North York, Hamilton, London, Windsor, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver and Victoria. Abroad, the service is provided through Canadian diplomatic and consular posts. Certificates of identity are issued in Canada to eligible legally landed non-Canadians. United Nations refugee travel documents are issued in Canada to persons eligible under the UN refugee convention.

21.3 Multilateral activities

21.3.1 Canada and the Commonwealth

The Commonwealth has evolved into an international association of 49 sovereign nations embracing approximately one-quarter of the earth's surface and one billion of its people, who are diverse in race, colour, creed and language. Comprising both developed and developing countries, the Commonwealth represents a unique association whose members share many of the same traditions, political and social values, attitudes and institutions. All members collectively subscribe to certain common ideals known as the Declaration of Commonwealth Principles. Commonwealth membership is not an alternative, but a complement to other forms of international co-operation — its members

believe in and work for the success of the United Nations. As well, most of them belong to other international organizations and to regional associations of states.

Membership in the Commonwealth and pursuit of its work and goals are an important aspect of foreign policy. Canadian objectives have remained constant: to strengthen the association and its contributions to international peace and progress, and to assist its development as a vehicle for practical co-operation. In 1986, apartheid in South Africa dominated Commonwealth affairs. The organization has no binding rules; decisions are by consensus rather than formal vote.

A Commonwealth secretariat in London organizes and services official Commonwealth conferences, facilitates exchanges of information between member countries and brings together their views. Canada pays its share of the budget of the secretariat and contributes to many other Commonwealth institutions and programs: a Commonwealth fund for technical co-operation, a Commonwealth youth program, a Commonwealth foundation, a Commonwealth scholarship and fellowship plan and the Commonwealth Games.

Canada is scheduled to host a meeting of the Commonwealth in October 1987 — the first occasion for a Commonwealth conference to be held in Canada since 1973.

21.3.2 Canada and "la Francophonie"

Unlike the Commonwealth, "la Francophonie" is not an institutional grouping of countries. The term encompasses a community of countries sharing in various measures the French language and culture, an assembly of heads of state and government, inter-governmental institutions and private organizations.

The federal government represents Canada in these forums, and special participating government status is enjoyed by the provinces of Quebec and New Brunswick within the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation, the main international francophone organization. With the provinces, Canada also participates in two major francophone ministerial conferences, the conference of ministers of youth and sports, and the conference of ministers of national education. Quebec and New Brunswick are also represented by their Premiers at the meetings of heads of state and government, using French as a common language. The first such meeting took place in Paris in February 1986, and the next is scheduled to be held in Quebec in 1987. Within the context of "la Francophonie",