



LESSONS FROM THE TSUNAMI

***Review of the Response of Foreign Affairs Canada
to the December 26, 2004
Indian Ocean Tsunami Crisis***

Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada
Office of the Inspector General
Evaluation Division (ZIE)

May 27, 2005

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ACRONYMS

AGD	Global and Human Issues Bureau (FAC)
AGH	Human Rights, Humanitarian Affairs, and International Women's Equality Division (FAC)
BCM	Media Relations Division (FAC)
CBS	Canada-based Staff
CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CRC	Canadian Red Cross
DART	Disaster Assistance Response Team
DND	Department of National Defence
FAC	Foreign Affairs Canada
HCD	Services for Executive Branch (FAC)
HMA	Assignment and Pool Management Division (FAC)
HOM	Head of Mission
IDC	Regional Security and Peacekeeping Division (FAC)
IHA	International Humanitarian Assistance Program (CIDA)
ITCan	International Trade Canada
JPD	Consular Affairs Bureau (FAC)
JPE	Consular Affairs/ Emergency Services Division (FAC)
LES	Locally-Engaged Staff
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NESS	National Emergency Stockpile System
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PCO	Privy Council Office
PHAC	Public Health Agency Canada
PMO	Prime Minister's Office

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PSEPC	Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada
ROCA	Registry of Canadians Abroad
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
TD	Temporary Duty
UN OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN)
ZIE	Evaluation Division (FAC)

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On December 26, 2004 a massive earthquake struck beneath the waters off the northwestern coast of Indonesia unleashing a series of tsunami waves with catastrophic results for Indian Ocean coastal areas, particularly in Indonesia, Thailand, and Sri Lanka. Canada joined what was to become a major international humanitarian relief effort, immediately placing a moratorium on debt owed to Canada by affected countries and ultimately committing to relief and reconstruction \$425 million in Government of Canada support accompanied by some \$230 million donated by the Canadian public, \$20 million donated by Canadian provinces and territories and \$9 million donated by private companies and unions.

The federal government led the Canadian response. The Canadian International Development Agency administered Canada's aid contributions. An RCMP forensic team of ten travelled to the region to participate in the international effort to identify bodies. The Department of National Defence 200-person Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) provided health services in Sri Lanka. The Prime Minister and several other ministers visited the area. Consular services were delivered by Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC) to Canadians in the region and to their relatives in Canada. FAC also coordinated the efforts of Government departments and agencies.

The present review objectively assesses the Government of Canada response to the tsunami crisis, focusing on the performance of FAC. The review team examined 59 documents, including the Government's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for international natural disasters and the summary report from the February 25, 2005 interdepartmental meeting conducted interviews with 43 senior FAC personnel and other stakeholders; completed a survey of 83 mission and temporary duty (TD) personnel; and attended a debriefing meeting in Hong Kong with heads of missions (HOMs) from the affected region.

The review found that Canada responded effectively to the consular needs of Canadians affected indirectly and directly by the crisis, and played a prominent role in the international effort to meet the humanitarian needs in the region. This was accomplished by following the guidance provided by the SOPs and through the extraordinary efforts of Canada's mission staff, hundreds of FAC headquarters personnel and personnel representing other government departments and agencies, a high level of cooperation among organizations within Canada and internationally, and strong leadership.

FAC fulfilled its coordination role effectively. FAC became the hub through which information and decisions flowed. Lines of coordination ran between the missions in the

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affected region and headquarters, between FAC and other government departments and agencies, between FAC officials and parliamentarians, and between FAC and its counterparts in the countries affected, the multilateral agencies involved in the response, and other countries supporting the relief effort. FAC convened daily meetings of an interdepartmental task force and produced daily situation reports (sitreps), measures that provided predictability, transparency, and discipline to the process.

There were significant challenges. Human resources were over taxed. Some technical systems were weak. There was uncertainty regarding protocols and authorities. There was a high level of scrutiny from media and some Canadians' expectations were unduly high. The Government was at times placed in a reactive mode in attempting to defend a specific action or position, or to explain perceived inconsistencies among statements made by different departments and agencies. There were problems associated with transportation and equipment. Staff suffered from the effects of the crisis and from overwork.

In short, the crisis stretched the limits of FAC's systems. Normal duties were neglected, and it will take some time to recover. Had another disaster occurred during the tsunami crisis the Department would have been hard pressed to muster additional resources. The Human Rights, Humanitarian Affairs, and International Women's Equality Division (AGH) and the Consular Affairs Emergency Division (JPE), both of which played central roles in FAC's response to the crisis, were found to be under-resourced.

The overall lesson stemming from the review is that where reliable preparations, systems and procedures were in place, Canada's response was effective and efficient. Key players knew what was required, had access to the tools they needed, and performed their duties ably and fully. Where preparations were inadequate, there were, at times, false starts, errors, near misses and inefficiencies. Investment in crisis preparation paid off. For the future, Canada needs a robust, flexible, sophisticated international crisis response system. Recommendations are summarized as follows:

Recommendation 1: Update the Government of Canada SOPs incorporating lessons learned from the tsunami crisis focusing particularly on: the crisis management team; timing of critical decisions; reconnaissance missions and the DART; financial rules; checklists and templates; and, partnerships with the Canadian Red Cross, other NGOs and UN agencies.

Recommendation 2: With other government departments and agencies, provinces, other Canadian partners, and international bodies, establish pre-approvals and agreements related to crisis response.

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- Recommendation 3:** Maintain a roster of internal departmental crisis response expertise able and willing to undertake on short notice crisis response related duties at headquarters or temporary duty at missions. An on-call “first response” list of personnel qualified to make up a core crisis response management team should be maintained on a 24 hours a day, seven days a week basis.
- Recommendation 4:** Provide additional training related to crisis response including: crisis management training for HOMs; crisis response training for mission personnel and for headquarters personnel; media training; and consular services training.
- Recommendation 5:** Ensure adequate emotional support for employees and family members during and after crises.
- Recommendation 6:** Ensure the provision of fair and equitable rewards and recognition to affected staff following a crisis response.
- Recommendation 7:** Maintain a roster of Canadian crisis response expertise from outside FAC (as well as selected departmental personnel) prepared to take part in rapid deployment teams.
- Recommendation 8:** Strengthen and integrate with the stabilization and reconstruction task force (START) the departmental crisis response unit (AGH) to ensure sufficient capacity during major, prolonged international crises.
- Recommendation 9:** Strengthen core capacity of the Emergency Services Division of Consular Affairs to ensure sufficient capacity during major, prolonged international crises.
- Recommendation 10:** Enhance the physical facilities and computer systems of the Consular Operations Centre.
- Recommendation 11:** Enhance the crisis management features of the facilities and systems at headquarters and at embassies.
- Recommendation 12:** Ensure the availability of adequate crisis response equipment including temporary duty / rapid deployment team kits, and equipment for satellite offices.

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- Recommendation 13:** Ensure the availability of sufficient emergency stockpiles ready for deployment, both in Canada and abroad.
- Recommendation 14:** Strengthen media and public relations to ensure the proactive provision of coordinated government information on, and explanations of, Canada's response.
- Recommendation 15:** Exchange best practices with like-minded countries.

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2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background and Purpose

On December 26, 2004 a massive earthquake struck beneath the waters off the northwestern coast of Indonesia unleashing a series of tsunami waves with catastrophic results for Indian Ocean coastal areas, particularly in Indonesia, Thailand, and Sri Lanka. Canada was quick to join what was to become a major international humanitarian relief effort. Ultimately the Government of Canada would commit some \$425 million to relief and reconstruction in the affected region.

Large numbers of Canadians were immediately affected because the crisis struck popular tourist destinations and the homelands of many Canadians.

The Canadian response was led by the federal government with Foreign Affairs Canada playing a lead coordinating role. Government of Canada actions were jointly undertaken by Foreign Affairs Canada, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Department of National Defense, the RCMP, and other departments.

The magnitude of the crisis was unprecedented in recent times and Canada's capacity to respond was stretched beyond the normal breaking point. Canada rose to the challenge, fulfilling its duties to its citizens and more than meeting its international obligations. Nevertheless, an opportunity has been presented to reflect on, and learn from, the crisis, hopefully enabling Canada to respond even more effectively should the need arise in the future. The present review¹ concentrates on the performance of FAC respecting its role. According to the terms of reference: *The purpose of the review is to inform FAC's planning and decision-making with regard to future crisis situations and, in combination with other reviews, to provide timely input to broader Government of Canada decision-making, including those of the Global Affairs Committee of Cabinet in June 2005.*

¹ Most countries involved in responding to the tsunami crisis are of a similar view concerning the opportunity to draw lessons. Reviews and evaluations are being undertaken by numerous nations including the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and Australia. It is expected that there will be both positive and negative evaluations. An early evaluation to come to Canada's attention is that of Norway. Their independent commission's findings are critical, pointing out major weaknesses in the Foreign Ministry's handling of the crisis. Deficiencies include: a lack of emergency plans, no disaster training, and no operative organization for this type of crisis. Several conferences, including the International Conference on Promoting Financial Accountability in Managing Funds Related to Tsunami, Conflict and Other Disasters, held in Jakarta on April 25-27, 2005 and attended by Canada, have been convened or are planned for the near future. At least 38 donor agencies are involved in assessment activities. In Canada, DND and CIDA will both be doing their own evaluation exercises. In June, a joint departmental account of all tsunami expenditures and results will be compiled.

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The objectives of the review are:

- 1. to assess FAC's effectiveness in coordinating the Government of Canada's response to the Tsunami Crisis;*
- 2. to assess FAC's effectiveness in managing the crisis team; and*
- 3. to assess FAC's effectiveness in managing the response to crisis at field missions;*
- 4. in order to to identify results, best practices and lessons; and*
- 5. to make recommendations to improve FAC's performance in response to future crises.*

2.2 Methodology

Document Review: The review is based on several complementary sources of evidence. Fifty-nine documents including correspondence, transcripts, websites, articles, and files related to FAC's response to the tsunami crisis were reviewed. These included: *Government of Canada Standard Operating Procedures for Response to International Natural Disasters*, daily situation reports ("sitreps"), *Manual of Security Instructions Chapter 8 - Consular Contingency Planning*, *Tsunami Interdepartmental Lessons Learned* (summary of the February 25, 2005 interdepartmental meeting), "lessons learned" reports from involved FAC branches and directorates, Qs & As and press conference and technical briefing transcripts, and the Treasury Board submission respecting the financing of FAC's tsunami crisis response.

Interviews: The review team interviewed 43 involved personnel from FAC, other government departments, and stakeholder agencies. FAC interviewees included: the Deputy Minister, the Associate Deputy Minister, senior staff representing the South and Southeast Asia Bureau, senior staff representing the Human Rights, Humanitarian Affairs, and International Women's Equality Division, headquarters managers of the Consular Affairs Bureau, directors general and senior staff representing the Human Resources Branch, the Communications Bureau, the Executive Services Bureau and the Corporate Finance, Planning and Systems Bureau (SMD), and senior staff from the Office of the Minister. Interviewees from other government departments included the Director General Humanitarian Assistance Peace and Security, and other key senior personnel from CIDA, DND personnel, the Director General, International Liaison Branch, RCMP, and representatives from ITCan, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, PMO, PCO, and PSEPC. Representatives of the Canadian Red Cross and Oxfam were also interviewed.

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Mission Survey: Staff involved in Canada's response to the tsunami disaster at missions were asked to complete an e-mail questionnaire concerning the effectiveness of Canada's consular assistance in the field, Canada's coordination of Canadian efforts in the field, communication between missions and headquarters, and mission emergency preparedness and response. Respondents were also asked about the impacts of the crisis on staff and their families. The review team sent questionnaires in both official languages to mission personnel, Canada-based and locally engaged staff, and to temporary duty personnel assigned to one of the Canadian missions in the region for the period immediately following the earthquake².

As seen in Table 1, 83 completed questionnaires were received, representing a 72 percent response rate.

Table 1: Survey Distribution and Responses			
Respondents	Survey Distribution	Survey Responses	Response Rate
Mission Personnel	78	58 ³	74%
TD Personnel	37	25	68%
Overall	115	83	72%

Staff responding to the survey were also provided with a questionnaire for their spouses to assess the effects of the disaster response on the families of employees. Six spouses provided comments.

Heads of Mission Meeting, Hong Kong: HOMs from the region gathered April 6-8, 2005 in Hong Kong with the Associate Deputy Minister and other key headquarters managers to debrief and discuss lessons stemming from Canada's crisis response in the field. The review team was represented at the meeting which contributed critical insights to the review.

TD Focus Group: A focus group discussion was convened in Ottawa with headquarters staff having returned from temporary duty in the region. This exercise provided additional input respecting conditions and activities on the ground. While the

² The questionnaire was e-mailed directly to 37 FAC staff assigned to temporary duty in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Questionnaires were also sent to the head of missions in Bangkok, Colombo, Jakarta, Delhi and Nairobi with instructions to forward it to mission staff that had been involved in responding to the disaster. Respondents were asked to send their completed surveys directly to the evaluators to ensure confidentiality.

³ Of the 58 mission personnel who responded to the survey, 60 percent were Canada-based staff from Foreign Affairs Canada and other government departments and 40 percent were locally engaged staff.

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activities of the various actors representing the Government of Canada were in many ways integrated with one another and difficult to separate out, the review focused on the performance of FAC. The review excludes an examination or audit of financial issues (these issues are being addressed separately). The review is designed to provide high level strategic advice based on an objective synthesis of the experience and views of those most closely involved in responding to the crisis.

2.3 Constraints

There were no major constraints. However, the survey, interviews and much of the documentation review had to be compiled in less than three weeks in order to have preliminary findings ready for the HOM meeting in Hong Kong. Ideally, the review team would have travelled to the affected missions and undertaken face-to-face interviews, including interviews with a more representative sample of spouses. However, time did not permit.

2.4 Report Organisation and Focus

The next chapter provides an overview of Canada's humanitarian crisis response systems generally, and Canada's response to the Indian Ocean tsunami crisis specifically, including a more detailed description of FAC's role. Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 identify strengths and weaknesses in FAC's capacity to respond to international disasters identified in the course of responding to the tsunami crisis and contain a total of 15 recommendations. Chapter 9 presents a summary of lessons learned and best practices, and Chapter 10 presents conclusions.

The tsunami was a unique disaster eliciting a unique response. Through the extraordinary effort of Canada's mission staff and hundreds of FAC headquarters personnel and personnel representing other government departments and agencies, Canada responded to the needs of Canadians and took a prominent role in the international effort to meet the humanitarian needs in the region. Generally, the Government of Canada's approach proved sound. Yet, the magnitude of the crisis created problems, and weaknesses in existing systems were exposed. The lessons from this experience will enable FAC to learn and to adapt its systems and procedures in order to enhance its effectiveness in responding to future crises.

Recommendations focus on areas where improvements can be made covering a wide spectrum in keeping with the range of functions and activities brought to bear in responding to crises. While the review team has tried to avoid an overly prescriptive approach, some recommendations necessarily contain considerable detail.

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FAC has already begun taking action consistent with a number of the recommendations; nevertheless, each recommendation is presented in full as indicated by the analysis. In the end, the hope is to benefit from this tragedy by ensuring that Canada is prepared as well as it can reasonably be to effectively respond to whatever disasters befall the international community in the years ahead.

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3. GOVERNMENT OF CANADA'S RESPONSE TO THE TSUNAMI CRISIS

3.1 Canada's Response to the Tsunami Crisis

Day 1. Just before midnight EST on December 25, 2004 (just before noon on December 26, 2004 in Indonesia) the on-call team member of the Human Rights, Humanitarian Affairs, and International Women's Equality Division (AGH) received word of a large earthquake off the coast of Indonesia. AGH's representative went immediately to the Lester B. Pearson building to monitor the situation and coordinate action as warranted. By 1:20 a.m. EST, the first situation report (SITREP) was issued stating "according to the US Geological Survey, a strong earthquake measuring 8.1 is reported to have struck 250 km south/southwest of Banda Aceh, Indonesia on December 26th at 06:58." AGH had already alerted managers in FAC's Southeast Asia Bureau and at CIDA. Contact had also been made with the Red Cross and with Canada's Mission in Jakarta. Less than twelve hours later the second sitrep was issued describing what was then known about the tsunamis resulting from the earthquake and the damage and loss of lives they caused:

The scope of damage from the quake seems wide. OCHA (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) Indonesia is not able to contact their office in Aceh – electricity has been cut, and the mobile system is down. A military assistance flight and team from the Indonesian Red Cross are expected to be in the region tomorrow. The UN Disaster Management Team is preparing a response.

[Canada's mission in Sri Lanka] is reporting that the Ministry of Defense estimates that some 5,000 people may have died as a result of the tsunami which hit the southern tip of the island. Local telephone networks are unable to handle the volume of calls that are presently being made and contact to anyone outside of the Colombo area has been difficult. The mission is attempting to call Canadians listed in the Registry of Canadians Abroad⁴. Hospitals are not responding to phone calls. The southern tip of the island is completely closed off (no one can enter or exit).

A tsunami struck southwest Thailand (Andaman Sea coast) at 10:00 causing major damage to the coastal tourist areas of Phuket, Krabi, and Koh Phi-phi. Current reports indicate that some 250 people are dead with 500 people missing. A number of Canadians are stranded or have moved

⁴ ROCA – a voluntary registry maintained by FAC.

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to higher ground. There is a report of one Canadian having been injured, and the individual is receiving medical attention. The Canadian Embassy is dispatching a team to Phuket tonight to locate and assist Canadians.

Wardens⁵ in Chennai, Pondercherry and Andhirapradesh (India) have been contacted. All Canadian registrants seem fine.

Discussions are underway between FAC, CIDA and PCO on the preparation of press release(s) regarding a Canadian contribution and condolences.

FAC and CIDA have discussed an initial cash contribution of \$1 million in response to relief efforts. Additional Canadian responses will be made as more information becomes available on needs which exist, including through local Canada Funds and other sources.

Consistent with the Standard Operating Procedures, AGH has called an interdepartmental Disaster Task Force Meeting for 12:30 today at the Pearson building.

Day 5. Over the next few days, as the magnitude of the crisis became increasingly evident, Canada's response expanded correspondingly. On December 30 the seventh sitrep⁶ was issued:

As of 22:00 Dec. 30 press reporting of government sources puts the death toll from the earthquakes and tsunamis that struck December 26th at close to 120,000.

Field reports indicate thousands of [displaced persons] are arriving in Banda Aceh, with impromptu camps mushrooming with little management and organization and with few supplies to maintain them. [A member of Canada's embassy in Jakarta] who had returned to Medan from Banda Aceh confirms that massive food, water and fuel shortages are being reported throughout. One of two water treatment plants has been

⁵ Canada's warden system, coordinated by missions, assigns contact lists of Canadians registered in ROCA to "wardens" – typically Canadians in the host country for an extended period. In an emergency, wardens are instructed to contact everyone on their lists and report back to the mission.

⁶ Sitreps were sent by e-mail and often contained attached files. For example, the first sitrep included a copy of the SOPs. Later sitreps included technical reports, transcripts of press conferences, and other pertinent documents. Sitreps were widely and openly circulated. The first sitrep was sent to missions, senior FAC personnel, and representatives of CIDA and several other government departments – some 60 recipients in total. By the height of the crisis, each sitrep went to 331 mailboxes.

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destroyed, and the other functions at 60 percent capacity. Spreading diseases due to poor sanitation (especially the unburied dead), lack of shelter and insufficient medical care remain major concerns. Media reports suggest that 95 percent of supplies which have arrived at the Banda Aceh airport remain undistributed and the city remains in chaos.

[In Sri Lanka] the High Commissioner to Canada confirms that medicines and clean water or facilities for providing drinking water are most urgently needed. The lone Canadian fatality in Sri Lanka has been identified and the next of kin informed.

[In Thailand] authorities say that bodies already collected are decaying quickly, making visual identification impossible. [Canada's embassy in Bangkok] highlights the acute long-term need for forensic specialists. In Thailand there are four confirmed Canadian dead.

[The Consular Division] continues to be in contact with all relevant embassies in the region, who are actively pursuing information on the well being of Canadians in affected areas. Wardens and Canadian volunteers are assisting with these efforts. [The Division] continues to receive a high volume of phone calls from the public, and additional FAC staff are volunteering in the Operations Centre.

Further to the Prime Minister's announcement yesterday, the Government of Canada has set aside \$40 million in total. Retroactive to Sunday, and until the donor conference of January 11, the Government of Canada will match funds to recognized Canadian NGOs with established local partners that are already involved in responding to the disasters caused by the earthquakes and tsunamis in South and Southeast Asia.

The plane with goods bound for Sri Lanka departed Tuesday evening from Trenton. 2 CIDA staff and a Canadian Red Cross delegate are on board. Heads of Mission in the affected countries have been authorized...to speak to Canadian media that have been dispatched to the site. The Ministers of [Foreign Affairs, Defense, Development, and] Health held a press conference today at 3:30 P.M. for which the transcript is attached. A task force meeting will take place everyday at 10:30 A.M. in room A8 126 until further notice.

Canada's Overall Response. It is now known that the tsunami claimed some 220,000 lives in eleven countries, with thousands of people still missing. Millions have been left homeless. Indonesia was hardest hit. Thailand, Sri Lanka, India, and the Maldives also

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suffered greatly. Numerous coastal towns and cities have been rendered uninhabitable. Farmlands and forests have been contaminated and fish stocks have been depleted.

Canada's response was swift, generous and effective. FAC, in close collaboration with CIDA, initiated action. Following procedures prescribed in the SOPs, FAC established an interdepartmental task force as well as ad-hoc working groups within FAC in support of consular services, media relations, human resource management, and financial services. Many key departments, e.g., CIC, DND, and CIDA, established their own internal task forces. Several other multi-organizational task forces were formed including the diplomacy group which included FAC, DND and the RCMP, and the CIDA-led humanitarian assistance group which coordinated humanitarian assistance with FAC, the Canadian Public Health Agency, CIC, Social Development Canada, the UN, the Red Cross, Oxfam, and other NGOs.

Canada's missions in the affected region responded immediately, calling back from holidays all available staff. The priority at missions was the provision of consular services to Canadians in the area. However, all missions were also heavily involved in humanitarian relief work on the ground. The missions made use of their Canada Funds to provide additional assistance through local partners. Canada's efforts in this regard were visible and appreciated.

Within the first two weeks, Canada sent to the region several plane loads of emergency supplies from the stockpiles of the Canadian Red Cross, the Public Health Agency of Canada and Health Partners International including plastic sheeting, five thousand jerry cans, 35,000 water purification tablets, antibiotics and painkillers, generators, warehouse structures, water bladders, blankets, and flashlights. Some of these flights were provided by DND. Solid relations with OCHA, the International Red Cross, and other partners helped to ensure that goods from Canada were efficiently distributed.

On January 2, 2005 a team of ten RCMP forensic specialists was sent to Phuket to join the international effort coordinated by Interpol to identify remains. Following a multidisciplinary reconnaissance mission, on January 6, 2005 Canada sent to Sri Lanka the 200-member DART to provide primary medical care and safe drinking water. The DART remained on site for 40 days. DART medical teams saw more than 5,000 patients, and engineers produced nearly 1.5 million litres of drinking water and transported more than 55,000 people across a local waterway. The DART also carried out several community projects including school repair, clearing rubble, and constructing temporary shelters.

Canada was represented in the region by the Prime Minister, as well as by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Development, and Health who attended several international donor coordination meetings and visited affected areas and missions.

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Early in the crisis, Canada established a debt moratorium for the foreseeable future for countries affected by the tsunami, and the Government announced that it would match donations made by Canadians to selected aid agencies. Applications for visas were fast-tracked for family members of Canadian citizens and permanent residents from the region, and visa application fees were waived⁷. The Prime Minister declared January 8th, 2005 a national day of mourning in Canada.

Throughout the crisis CIDA worked closely both with FAC and other government departments and multilateral and NGO partners to channel Canada's aid. Citizenship and Immigration Canada staff at missions, like all mission staff irrespective of the department for which they work, abandoned their regular duties to assist HOMs in providing consular service and humanitarian relief. CIC sent ten temporary duty (TD) personnel to the Colombo mission to support this work as well as the increased workload associated with the numbers of Sri Lankans seeking to immigrate to Canada. CIC also added staff to its national call centre in Montreal to respond to inquiries from Canadian residents, primarily having to do with their relatives in Sri Lanka⁸.

As noted previously, the Canadian Government committed \$425 million toward relief and rehabilitation (\$265 million) over the next year, and toward reconstruction (\$160 million) during the subsequent four years. This makes Canada the seventh largest bilateral donor (the tenth largest per capita). Initially Canada joined a US-led donor coalition. The coalition disbanded on January 6, 2005 once OCHA was fully prepared to assume donor coordination duties.

About \$10 million will be used to cover FAC tsunami related expenses. Roughly one third of FAC's expenditures will cover salaries and overtime costs. The other two thirds will cover such items as the RCMP forensic team, travel and accommodations, ministerial visits, satellite offices, conference attendance, and tsunami affected employee relief packages.

Canadian NGOs have raised some \$230 million of which approximately \$200 million is eligible for matching funding (which will come out of the \$425 million). In addition to federal funding, Canadian provinces and territories donated approximately \$20 million. Canadian private sector companies and unions have donated close to \$9 million. Contributions from all sources, so far, total \$684 million, as shown in Table 2.

⁷ The standard initial application fee is \$550. If an application goes through all the steps, the total fee is \$975.

⁸ Canada is home to some 250,000 Sri Lankan immigrants.

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Table 2: Canadian Contributions to Tsunami Relief and Reconstruction	
Government (Relief and Rehabilitation)	\$265M
Government (Reconstruction)	\$160M
Government Total	\$425M
Public Donations to NGOs	\$230M
Provinces and Territories	\$20M
Private Companies and Unions	\$9M
TOTAL	\$684M

Canadians were keenly interested in following developments in the region and observed the Government of Canada's response with a critical eye. In a national poll published on January 8th, 2005 by Ipsos Research, 79 percent of Canadians approved the way the Prime Minister had responded to the disaster to date, and 71 percent of Canadians felt the Government was "doing just the right amount."

3.2 Coordinating the Government of Canada Response

All sources of evidence support the finding that FAC fulfilled its coordination role effectively. FAC became the hub through which information and decisions flowed. Lines of coordination ran between the missions in the affected region and headquarters, between FAC and other government departments and agencies, between FAC officials and parliamentarians, and between FAC and its counterparts in the affected countries, the multilateral agencies involved in the response, and other countries supporting the relief effort.

Daily meetings and conference calls were a critical element in FAC's success in this regard. Every evening at 11:00 p.m., with the exception of a brief period when he was attending a meeting in the UK, the Deputy Minister participated in a conference call with other donor countries. Every morning at 8:30 a.m. officials at headquarters participated in a conference call with HOMs in the affected region. Every day at 10:30 a.m. the Deputy Minister chaired an interdepartmental meeting/conference call open to representatives from any government department wishing to attend⁹. The 10:30 meeting proved to be the central mechanism in ensuring a coordinated, whole-of-government response; beginning on December 26 these meetings were held daily for 34 days without interruption.

⁹ The invitation lists to these meetings were purposefully left open. Departments and agencies were free to attend in person or by telephone and to choose for themselves their level of representation.

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Another critical element in FAC's coordination efforts was the daily sitrep. These were widely circulated within the department and among other government departments and agencies, and proved to be the single most important source of up-to-date information during the crisis.

Interdepartmental relations were characterized by flexibility and a high level of cooperation. The Government of Canada response, according to interviewees, truly was a whole-of-government response. Canada also worked effectively with other donor countries including the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Japan, and India. At the mission level, the vast majority of survey respondents (83%) thought Canadian missions were either effective or very effective in coordinating the Canadian response to the crisis.

Responses	Number	Percentage
Very effective	14	32%
Effective	12	27%
Problems in coordination	6	14%
Other *	12	27%
Total responses	44	100%

- * Many of the responses to this question discussed the effectiveness of the host government response. A number were complimentary of the Thai government's response, while others said the Colombo mission faced difficulties due to disorganization on the part of the Sri Lankan government.

As shown in Table 3, more than half (59%) of respondents thought the Canadian missions were effective or very effective in coordinating with the host country. However, 18 percent said there were difficulties in coordinating with local authorities. Some of these difficulties were linked to disorganization on the part of host governments and the lack of strong partnerships prior to the disaster. As shown in Table 4, respondents were also positive about mission management during the crisis. Sixty percent said they were well managed and given clear expectations and direction or that management was "excellent." A further twelve percent complimented their ambassadors for their leadership. Sixteen percent of staff said they lacked clear direction and guidance; half of these were locally engaged staff.

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Table 4: Management During the Crisis		
Responses	Number	Percentage
Excellent management	14	21%
Well managed	26	39%
Lack of clear direction	11	16%
Complimented ambassadors for leadership	8	12%
Other	8	12%
Total responses	67	100%

The Ambassador was a pillar of strength and he cobbled together a first class team to manage the crisis and what was required in an incredibly tight time frame with limited resources. A true example of leadership and strength...

- Temporary duty officer assigned to affected mission

Missions were appreciative of the easy and quick access they were given to financial resources and of the blanket authority they received to waive fees and to provide assistance for hospital stays and other local services for Canadians. Increases in the Canada Fund provided missions with the ability to respond quickly. Competent fiscal management by Corporate Finance, Planning and Systems Bureau (SMD) personnel ensured that all expenditures were properly sourced and tracked. The Bureau, with the support of the financial work group, also took responsibility for developing the Memorandum to Cabinet requesting the overall Government of Canada funding package. This Memorandum to Cabinet was completed and approved in one week. The Bureau developed FAC's detailed budget for Treasury Board approval. The Bureau also worked on an ongoing basis to obtain authorities for expenditure decisions that were made on the fly. The Bureau created a statistical order number against which they tracked all tsunami related expenses and, as a result, the Bureau is able to produce a detailed and accurate accounting of FAC's expenditures related to the tsunami crisis response.

3.3 International Humanitarian Crisis Resources and Procedures

Coordinated International Community: Canada's approach to responding to natural disasters abroad results from two decades of experience and institution building both nationally and internationally. Disaster response experts have found that a coordinated international response places fewer burdens on the affected country, ensures that the

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right assistance reaches identified needs, ensures that all needs are addressed, avoids competition and duplication of efforts, and facilitates integration of efforts in the field. This is especially important in the initial hours and days of a crisis when the magnitude of the disaster must be assessed and appropriate response measures identified. Canada contributes specialists and materiel to organizations such as the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) and is in constant contact with them when disasters occur. This is a well oiled and efficient system that Canada helped build and that we continue to support today. It is a significant aspect of the Government's toolkit for responding to natural disasters.

Standard Operating Procedures: In order that Canada can effectively play its part, the Government of Canada has, over the years, developed procedures proven to work in responding to natural disasters. Over five years ago, with the agreement of all Government departments and agencies, these procedures were formalized as the "standard operating procedures for international natural disasters (SOPs) for rapid and effective response to floods, earthquakes, hurricanes and other such disasters [that] serve as a guide where appropriate for government officials to follow. The SOPs [are] updated and revised on a regular basis and are also contingent on the gravity of the disaster"¹⁰. The SOPs provide procedural guidance on disaster preparation, assessment, monitoring and reporting from the affected region, communications among key players, media relations, the establishment of an interdepartmental task force, relations with civil society organizations, daily situation reports (sitreps)¹¹, and disaster follow-up. The SOPs also contain Government of Canada guidelines on "How Canadians Can Help" including up-to-date coordinates of major international relief organizations.

Foreign Affairs Canada: In the case of international natural disasters, Foreign Affairs Canada is responsible for coordinating the Government of Canada response¹². The SOPs are maintained by the Human Rights, Humanitarian Affairs, and International Women's Equality Division (AGH) within the FAC's Global and Human Issues Bureau. AGH is the initial contact point for international natural disasters. One member of the three-person AGH crisis response team is on call at all times. Through its missions and geographic bureaux, FAC provides geopolitical analysis and advice associated with

¹⁰ *Government of Canada Standard Operating Procedures For Response to International Natural Disasters*. All quotations in this section are from this source.

¹¹ Sitreps cover the nature and location of the disaster, the damage caused, the needs of the people as well as the needs of the organizations trying to provide assistance, the expected evolution of the disaster, details on the affected country's response, as well as details on international response. Sitreps detail relief priorities and gaps in assistance, and make recommendations as to the Canadian response.

¹² Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada (PSEPC) is responsible for coordinating the Government of Canada response to crises occurring within our borders

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disasters and disaster response, e.g., current political conditions in affected countries. FAC also coordinates Government of Canada relations with the media and provides communication material to Canadians. FAC also provides consular assistance to Canadians in the affected area, serves as the focal point for Canadians seeking information on people in the affected area, and oversees the preparation by missions of annually updated Consular Contingency Plans (FAC's consular function is described in more detail in the following section).

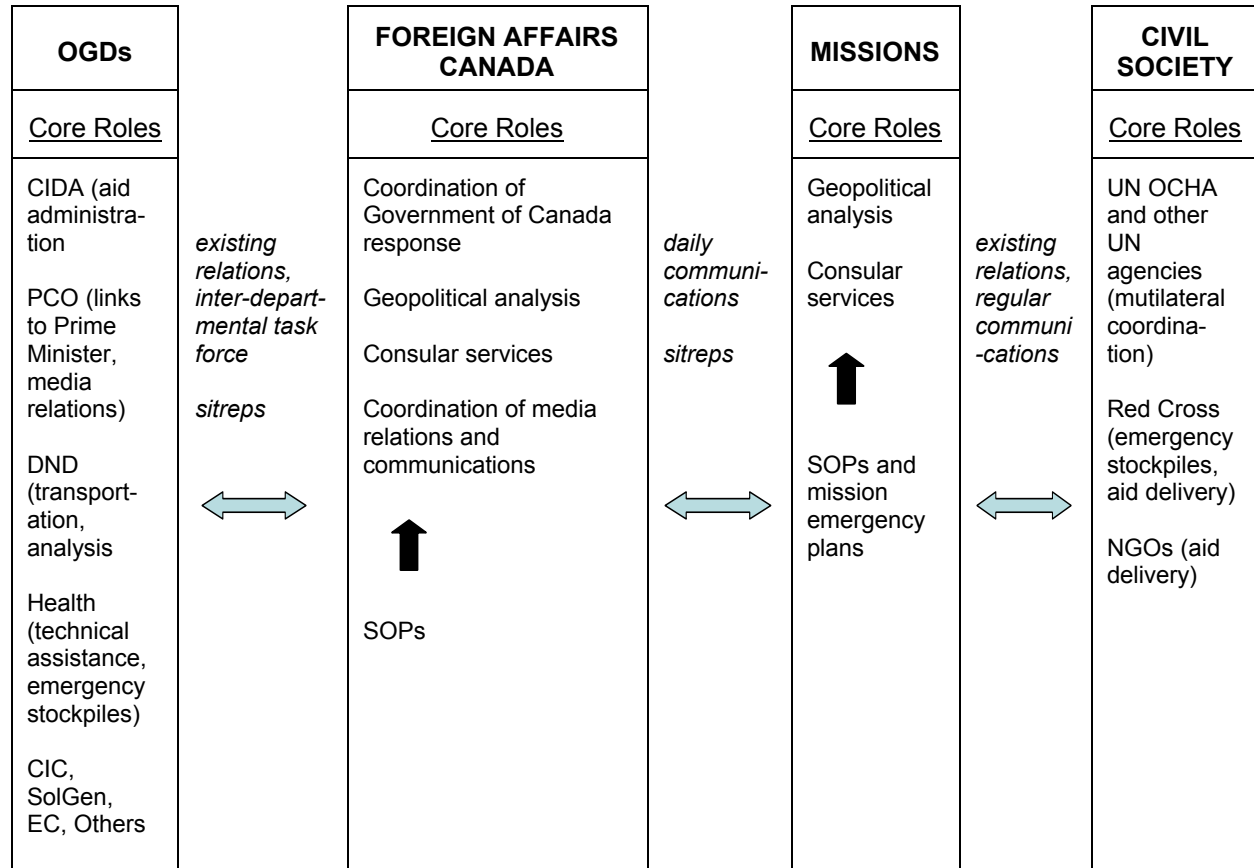
Other Government Department and Agencies: In the division of responsibilities, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is responsible for taking the lead in providing financial assistance for disaster relief and reconstruction on behalf of the Government of Canada. CIDA's International Humanitarian Assistance (IHA) program "is the Government's main channel for the provision of non-food emergency humanitarian assistance. IHA can fund emergency relief activities in the areas of health, water and sanitation, household and shelter needs, repatriation, reintegration and demobilization activities". The Privy Council Office is also active in international disaster response. The roles of the Privy Council Office are "to keep the Prime Minister informed and if necessary to obtain his decision or signature, and to ensure that Canada's communication plan and media relations are appropriate and well executed". Other governmental departments are included as needed in Canada's response to an international natural disaster. The Department of National Defence (DND) provides airlifts and other technical support as well as political and strategic advice. Health Canada, and particularly the Public Health Agency of Canada, maintains the national Emergency Stockpile System and assists in health related emergencies such as epidemics. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) provides immigration related assistance. The Solicitor General (SolGen), Environment Canada (EC), and other government departments and agencies (OGDs) can become involved, according to their mandates, if required.

Civil Society: The Government's SOPs for international natural disasters have been tested on numerous occasions over this period as Canada has been called upon to respond to hurricanes, earthquakes and other types of disasters. Key players among the commonly involved departments and agencies – most notably FAC's AGH Division and CIDA's IHA Program – have established strong working relations among themselves. Canadian Government officials and organizations have also developed strong working ties with their counterparts at partner civil society organizations. With UN OCHA typically playing the central international relief coordination role, the Red Cross and major international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) administer and deliver aid to affected countries. Canada works with these agencies through UN OCHA. More particularly, FAC and CIDA have developed good working relations with the Canadian Red Cross (which also maintains an emergency stockpile in Canada), the Canadian arms of INGOS (e.g., Oxfam Canada and CARE Canada), and other Canadian NGOs.

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Figure 1 depicts the main components of Canada’s natural disaster response system and the basic relationships between the components. The system enables Canada to participate effectively in the international community in times of crisis.

Figure 1: Canada’s International Natural Disaster Response System



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3.4 Consular Assistance

Canadian embassies, high commissions, and consulates located in the affected countries reopened to almost full staffing levels immediately. FAC mission staff were called in, and some officers were redeployed to affected areas. Temporary offices were opened in Phuket, Krabi, and Medan. Consular support provided to Canadians in the affected areas included: helping them return to Canada or their country of residence by issuing temporary or permanent passports; intervening with airlines to obtain replacement tickets; providing them with emergency funds once they had signed a Promise to Repay; hospitalization and visits by consular staff to hospitals; and intervening with medical travel insurance providers. Canadian consular officers at missions, especially in Thailand, also dealt with the families of Canadian victims including arranging for family members to travel to the region and arranging the repatriation of remains. Posts in the affected areas did not charge consular or passport fees to Canadian citizens affected by the disaster.

Consular requirements varied across affected missions. While more lives were lost in Indonesia, the requirement for consular services at the Jakarta mission were relatively few because of the small number of Canadians in Indonesia. The Bangkok mission was faced with considerable consular challenges owing to the large number of Canadian tourists at sites on Thailand's west coast. The Colombo mission faced a different set of challenges with a large number of Sri Lankan expatriates living in Canada. Many local citizens contacted the embassy for assistance during the crisis.

Consular assistance constituted the core function of FAC. Many headquarters interviewees and more than half of the mission and TD respondents to the survey (61%¹³) thought that providing consular assistance to Canadians was the most important thing Canadian missions did during the crisis. Respondents from Thailand emphasized the rapid response in getting consular staff on the ground at the disaster site in Phuket and the importance of promptly asking for assistance from Ottawa.

Responses	Number	Percentage
Very effective	39	70%
Effective	13	23%
Other	4	7%
Total responses	56	100%

¹³ 49 out of 80 respondents to the question.

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As shown in Table 5, almost all surveyed staff (93%) thought Canadian missions were very effective or effective in providing and coordinating consular assistance.

As a small mission, the only way to respond was to mobilize everyone we could. CIC (staff) were doing consular duties, the CIDA [personnel] helped with the logistics and contacts for the overwhelming number of visits from Canada, Canadian expats opened their homes to stranded Canadian tourists, as did mission staff.

- Canada-based staff, Colombo

FAC's Consular Operations Centre at headquarters was expanded immediately after the news of the tsunami and a special 1-800 consular emergency telephone number was announced. The Centre went to full staffing level and added experienced staff from other areas of the department. There were 42 staffed telephone lines during the two-week peak period, and the Centre operated 24 hours a day. Some 300 volunteers helped staff the Centre. The Centre has 14 fully equipped consular emergency offices, although under normal circumstances there are only four people operating the phones during the day, three during the evening, and two during the night shift. To provide surge capacity for major disasters, the Centre is equipped with an additional 14-station emergency centre (a cluster of telephone stations housed in one room). To respond to the tsunami crisis, FAC added 14 more telephone lines with stations set up in an adjoining boardroom. Over 100,000 incoming calls were logged from Canadians concerned for friends or family members thought to be in the tsunami-affected area. Centre operators recorded information, answered questions and made follow-up calls to report news back to callers. The Centre created a list of names of Canadians who were possibly in the area. FAC opened and resolved 3,932 consular cases¹⁴. A six-person Family Liaison Unit was set up and maintained contact with the families of the dead and presumed-dead Canadians, as well as those deemed "serious", some 150 cases in total.

¹⁴ In addition to these cases, there were 15 deaths, 5 "grave concern" (likely deaths), and 5 cases (6 people) missing for a total of 3,957 cases.

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4. FAC'S CAPACITY TO RESPOND: STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS RESPECTING OVERALL CRISIS MANAGEMENT, PLANS AND PROCEDURES

4.1 Emergency Plans and Procedures

The SOPs provided the backbone for FAC's actions as well as for the actions of the Government of Canada as a whole. In combination with the daily meetings – task forces within the department, interdepartmental task force, and HOMs conference calls – and with the daily sitreps, the SOPs informed and guided Canada's response providing predictability, transparency, and discipline to the process.

Responses	Number	Percentage
Plans/SOPs	8	25%
Emergency communication equipment	5	16%
ROCA/warden system	5	16%
CIDA emergency systems	3	9%
Can't prepare for something this big	2	6%
Other	9	28%
Total responses	32	100%

Every Canadian mission abroad maintains a Consular Contingency Plan. These plans, as a complement to the SOPs, provided guidance to mission staff during the crisis. As shown in Table 6, one quarter of survey respondents said contingency plans and training were useful in responding to the disaster. Staff in Jakarta said they put in practice recent training on how to deal with a terrorist strike. Staff in Bangkok said their consular handbooks and contingency plan were useful, while staff in Delhi highlighted a recent exercise in disaster management.

As useful as they were, the SOPs left a number of questions unanswered. The SOPs were developed and have been previously used to respond to disasters of a smaller scale, typically hurricanes and earthquakes claiming a relatively small number of lives and involving few, if any, Canadians. Most of these emergencies can be handled at the officer level by experienced crisis management personnel at FAC, CIDA, DND and

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occasionally other departments. The tsunami crisis was of a magnitude requiring widespread response including the prolonged involvement of officials at the highest levels of Government.

Firm guidance was lacking respecting several significant issues. The SOPs do not explicitly speak to:

- the question of reconnaissance missions and sending the DART. In the end, the DART proved to be a positive measure in relation to the direct assistance it provided to Sri Lankan victims and in relation to the symbolic role it played in conveying the message that Canada was concerned for the well being of Sri Lankans. A reconnaissance mission is an appropriate and necessary precursor to any initiative as large and expensive as the DART. However, some interviewees questioned the cost effectiveness of the DART from an aid effectiveness perspective and pointed out the problems that would have been created had every donor country chosen to send its own reconnaissance mission instead of relying on UN OCHA for guidance.
- questions concerning the appropriate number, constitution, and timing of VIP visits (this issue is discussed further in the next chapter).
- the use of Matching Fund mechanisms versus other possible approaches such as the UK's single-window Disaster Appeal Fund. According to CIDA informants, channelling matching funds to NGOs creates such problems as rewarding fund raising capability instead of aid capability, potentially distorting the allocation of funds, and limiting CIDA's ability to determine the most appropriate use of Canada's aid monies. Informants at aid agencies report that the Matching Fund rules restricted their flexibility in providing aid. Some agencies were confused about the Matching Fund and some simply did not bother to apply.
- reimbursement of disaster-related expenditures. For instance, how are costs recovered for such measures as waiving visa application fees and passport fees, and who pays what portion of evacuation costs?
- the role of Canada's provinces and territories in crisis response and channelling aid.
- linking Government efforts with the efforts of the Red Cross and other aid agencies. Like all national Red Cross agencies, the Canadian Red Cross has "auxiliary to government" status and is associated with the International Red Cross. The Red Cross has its own early warning and disaster assessment protocols. The Red Cross is represented worldwide and, along with major NGOs such as CARE, Oxfam, and World Vision, is experienced in providing coordinated disaster relief. For example, in a given situation the Red Cross may provide

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medical services, leaving the provision of food to CARE and the provision of water and sanitation services to Oxfam. The Red Cross also has strict rules concerning its involvement as related to levels of violence and the existence of terrorist activity in the affected country.

- when to deploy temporary duty personnel, when to deploy other response mechanisms, when to return to normal duties, and other key timing decisions.

The tsunami crisis highlighted the importance of involving a broad spectrum of FAC expertise from the onset, including Human Resources Branch and Corporate Finance, Planning and Systems Bureau (SMD) personnel. The crisis also highlighted the need for well-coordinated media relations and public communications. And the crisis demonstrated the value of having a set of simple templates and checklists to guide some of the more common tasks associated with response.

Interviewees noted a lack of procedural checklists for such common activities as arranging a charter flight, or setting up an international conference call. Interviewees also noted a lack of templates for such common items as press releases, meeting agendas and minutes, record of decisions and condolence letters. In both instances efforts undertaken in anticipation of future disasters to develop generic tools will pay off in time saved during a crisis.

The SOPs cannot cover every eventuality. Nor can the SOPs be overly detailed; officials have precious little time for reading elaborate instructions during an emergency and need room for innovation and flexibility. Yet, the tsunami crisis did surface areas where more guidance may have been useful. Recommendation 1, below, focuses on what the evidence suggests are the most critical areas for enhancement. It will be up to the authors of the SOPs to incorporate the lessons appropriately.

It is important to note that according to interviewees, the SOPs were not even referred to (and in some cases were not known) by a number of officials in other government departments playing key roles in the tsunami crisis response. It is also important to note that FAC is in the process of establishing an ongoing stabilization and reconstruction task force (START) to assess international crises related to failed and fragile states, terrorism, and threats to human security. The START will coordinate expertise across the government to provide a consolidated Government of Canada response. The START will be funded from the Global Peace and Security Fund, announced in the recent International Policy Statement. The advent of the START offers an opportunity to create an integrated crisis unit within FAC dedicated to responding to both natural and human-made international crises.

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Recommendation 1: Update the Government of Canada SOPs incorporating lessons learned from the tsunami crisis.

It is recommended that FAC review and strengthen the existing SOPs in anticipation of larger and more complex crises. This exercise should be carried out in the context of the establishment of the START. Ideally, the SOPs should cover both natural and human-made disasters and emergencies. The SOPs should continue to be actively maintained and updated, including current contact information for key personnel at all implicated departments and agencies as well as selected NGOs and other partners. The SOPs should be widely circulated and promoted. Lessons stemming from the experience of responding to the tsunami crisis – for example the wisdom of not releasing to the media the names of Canadian victims – should be incorporated into the next version of the SOPs. Other areas identified by the present review as warranting attention include the following:

- **Crisis Management Team.** Membership of the FAC intradepartmental core crisis management team should be reviewed. At a minimum, representatives from the Department's Human Resources Branch and Corporate Finance, Planning and Systems Bureau should be added.
- **Timing of Critical Decisions.** Based on the size, type and location of the emergency and the extent to which Canadians are affected, the SOPs should provide guidance on the timing of such critical decisions as when to send personnel and/or supplies to the region, when to establish other emergency measures, and when to wind down the crisis response and return staff to normal duties.
- **Reconnaissance Missions and the DART.** The SOPs should provide clear decision rules concerning reconnaissance missions, the DART, and other Canadian initiatives not requested by UN OCHA or the host country.
- **Financial Rules.** The SOPs should provide guidance concerning common financial measures that may be invoked by Canada in responding to international crises, such as waiving various user fees.
- **Checklists and Templates.** Simple checklists for common activities and procedures associated with crisis response should be created. Templates for common documents should also be created.
- **Partnerships with the Canadian Red Cross, other NGOs and UN agencies.** The revision of the SOPS should be undertaken in consultation with the Canadian Red Cross and other major aid agencies (e.g., CARE and Oxfam).

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4.2 Pre-existing Arrangements

The Government of Canada response to the tsunami crisis involved an unprecedented collaborative effort among over a dozen departments and agencies. Important links were also established with Canadian and international aid agencies, private sector partners, and other donor countries. By and large, relations were cooperative; getting the job done was more important than turf protection.

It was a scramble to be deployed—had to pay for own airline ticket, make flight arrangements.

- Temporary duty officer, Jakarta

Nevertheless, a number of obstacles were encountered. For example, the initial airlift of National Emergency Stockpile System supplies was hampered by administrative delays. The RCMP forensic team was ready to travel on Thursday, December 30th, but did not depart until Sunday, January 2nd, the earliest date on which flights could be arranged on commercial airlines. CIDA was uncertain for a period about whether or not it would be accountable for the DART budget, and, later, about the mechanics and protocols associated with the Matching Fund. Mechanisms for the integration of contributions by Canada's provinces, territories and municipalities were unclear; their desire to help was somewhat stymied by a lack of guidance as to their role. A wide range of non-traditional partners also came forward and, again, their role was unclear.

Recommendation 2: With other government departments and agencies, provinces, other Canadian partners, and international bodies, establish pre-approvals and agreements related to crisis response. It is recommended that FAC identify all domains in which agreements may be required in responding to crises and, to the extent possible, negotiate agreements in principle with the implicated parties. Such agreements may include: memoranda of understanding with other government departments and agencies and provincial ministries respecting the provision of services and cost recovery; tendered contracts or standing offers with private or non-governmental suppliers of such goods and services as equipment and transportation; protocols with international bodies including UN agencies and Interpol respecting the coordination of aid and related crisis responses services; and, agreements with other countries respecting landing rights and other privileges.

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5. FAC'S CAPACITY TO RESPOND: STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS RESPECTING HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

In many ways, the story of Canada's role in the tsunami crisis is a story about human resources – the people responsible for executing the Government of Canada response. Government of Canada employees made sacrifices and devoted inordinate amounts of time to ensure the most effective response possible. Interviewees spoke of managers and employees working as many as 35 days in a row without a break, and, at peak times, for 18 to 20 hours a day. Employees suffered personal losses. The ambassador's driver in Colombo lost members of his family in the disaster and yet continued to report for work every day. Some employees suffered from exhaustion or emotional strain. Even those with less dramatic experiences had to return, following their crisis work, to in-boxes piled with overdue assignments.

Yet the remarks made by interviewees and survey respondents reflected overwhelmingly a sense of pride and satisfaction with what was accomplished. This chapter contains an analysis of the human resources aspects of Canada's response with a view to ensuring a similar or greater level of success in the future without the undue risks and stress associated with stretching a work force beyond reasonable limits.

5.1 Surge Capacity within FAC

Central crisis management roles are played within FAC by AGH personnel, JPE personnel, managers of geographic bureaux, departmental executives, and managers and officers representing such functional areas as human resources, finance, and media relations. In large part, these key players are doing their regular jobs. As the tsunami crisis demonstrated, however, an even greater number of employees comprising the "crisis team" may be performing duties outside of their normal roles.

During the tsunami crisis, 53 temporary duty (TD) personnel were deployed from other missions and from headquarters to missions in the affected region. These staff, most of whom were foreign service officers or management consular officers with mission experience, markedly reduced the burden on mission staff by assisting with consular work (including dealing with Canadian victims and their families), VIP visits, attendance at international meetings, and logistics and management.

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Table 7: Most Helpful Assistance Provided to Missions by Headquarters		
Responses	Number	Percentage
Temporary duty officers	31	49%
Financial resources	11	18%
Ottawa Operations Centre	7	11%
Information	5	8%
Emergency relief	2	3%
Other	7	11%
Total responses	63	100% *

* Does not add up to 100 due to rounding.

As shown in Table 7, almost half of the survey respondents (49%) thought that the most helpful assistance provided by Ottawa was the temporary duty officers, especially the experienced consular staff. This related directly to the two issues that staff said were the biggest constraints – the lack of staff, and preparing for VIP visits while continuing to assist Tsunami victims. As shown in Table 8, while only half of respondents replied to the question, a significant number of them raised the need for greater support for VIP visits to the region. Staff felt torn between the immediate needs of victims and the efforts required for such visits.

Table 8: Assistance Needed by Mission, It Did Not Get From Headquarters		
Responses	Number	Percentage
Support for VIP visits	9	23%
Needs well covered	8	21%
Communications (technical)	6	15%
Staff support	4	10%
Early decision to waive passport fees	4	10%
Communications common messages	3	8%
Other	5	13%
Total responses	39	100%

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According to interviewees, the Human Resources Branch handled the deployment of TD personnel in a timely and effective manner; they quickly sent qualified people to the areas most in need of assistance. The Human Resources Branch also coordinated the assignment of 300 volunteers to the Consular Operations Centre at headquarters. In the latter case, according to interviewees, the appropriateness of the qualifications of assigned employees was inconsistent. Interviewees report that ideal operations centre volunteers are qualified in at least one of three areas: politely and efficiently handling telephone communications; sensitively dealing with families in distress; or coordinating telephone operators.

According to interviewees and survey respondents, a number of personnel needs went unmet during the crisis. Most of these related to administrative or technical support. For example, at the peak of the crisis most HOMs and headquarters managers were deluged by e-mails and telephone messages. This was on top of their busy meeting schedules and other duties. Some correspondence went unanswered, but most managers simply put in extra hours to reply to all inquiries. Administrative and/or technical assistants could have helped by, for example, undertaking the bulk of the reply duties or by configuring e-mail systems to automatically filter and sort messages. The qualifications of such personnel will vary. However, in the case of senior managers, experienced FSOs may make the best assistants. Several survey respondents pointed to the need for an IT communications expert to be among the first staff to arrive at a satellite office location in order to assist in setting up computers and satellite phones.

VIP visits present a multiplicity of challenges. By definition, VIP visits are always a burden on a disaster affected area because they require special, additional logistical and security arrangements including hotel beds, cars, extra cell phones, helicopter transportation, reception rooms, and other requirements, not to mention advanced preparation for each itinerary item. They require careful support by Mission staff and must be given significant attention by host country officials. Departmental officials are in the difficult situation of attempting to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of their front-line staff dealing directly with the disaster while at the same time working to support the wishes and needs of their ministers. Developing countries, expectant of receiving development assistance support, are in a difficult position if they refuse official visits. Especially at a time of great crisis, Canadians typically want to see their elected representatives actively engaged representing Canada on the ground. A visit to an affected area by our Prime Minister expresses on behalf of all Canadians our concern and our support. Visits to affected areas highlight the plight of affected populations and build support for further assistance. The lesson to be learned is to manage expectations and define an appropriate timing for visits.

By all accounts, the tsunami crisis team was led by exceptional managers, including the headquarters management group, and the HOMs and their senior staff. Many junior

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staff displayed remarkable leadership qualities as well. FAC's successful response has mainly to do with the caliber of people it employs, but also, it has to do with luck. The earthquake struck during Canada's Christmas holiday break and many personnel were on leave. As it happened, the initial skeleton crew leading the Government of Canada response had among them almost an ideal mix of skills and experience. Had this not been the case, the results may have been different.

Taken together, the evidence supports the finding that a more systematic method is needed by which to identify, qualify, select, and deploy TD and emergency assignment personnel, as well as the crisis management team.

Recommendation 3: Maintain a roster of internal departmental crisis response expertise. It is recommended that FAC create a roster of FAC personnel representing a wide range of functional expertise and geographical experience able and willing to undertake on short notice crisis response related duties at headquarters, including staffing the Consular Operations Centre, and/or on TD at missions. Sufficient numbers of individuals must be included in the roster to ensure availability of required personnel. Roster registrants should be based at headquarters and in the regions. The roster must be actively maintained with up-to-date registrant qualifications, coordinates and availability status. As a subset of the roster, an on-call "first response" list of personnel required to make up a core crisis response management team should be maintained on a 24 hours a day, seven days a week basis at headquarters and at each mission. Membership on the first response list would be rotated, and members would be notified and confirmed at each rotation. The first response list would be widely circulated.

5.2 Training

As noted above, FAC personnel involved most closely in the crisis response effort performed their jobs well. In most cases, this resulted from having relevant experience. Often this was by design; the right person was in place or was selected for the assignment. Sometimes it was simply good luck.

Interviewees noted a few situations in which personnel involved in the crisis response were "in over their heads." For instance, responding effectively to media inquiries and juggling the many unusual challenges that befell some of the missions were among the tasks that exceeded the capabilities of some personnel. Interviewees who had taken crisis related training noted the value of this training in effectively dealing with the tsunami crisis. Training at missions, where it occurred, prepared staff for many of the

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issues they would face during the tsunami crisis. Likewise, headquarters staff who had taken crisis training were better prepared, particularly for central coordinating roles.

Two other areas were mentioned by interviewees as warranting training. First, owing to the extraordinary interest on the part of Canadians in the crisis, FAC personnel not normally involved in media relations were called upon to speak to the press. This included HOMs as well as personnel at headquarters responsible for various aspects of the crisis response. While these personnel are reported to have performed effectively in this capacity, it was felt that, in anticipation of future crises, media training for personnel likely to find themselves in front of the press would be beneficial.

Secondly, in relation to Recommendation 3, above, if FAC personnel are to be pre-selected for duty in the Consular Operations Centre, interviewees suggested these individuals would benefit from a short program of related training. As such, the roster would be populated not only with qualified and willing personnel, but also with personnel having up-to-date knowledge and skills related to tasks in the Operations Centre.

(Jakarta) had already undergone some training and simulation exercises related to a terrorist strike. This quickly and easily lent itself to a response to natural disasters.

- Canada-based staff, Bangkok

Recommendation 4: Provide additional training related to crisis response.

Training is warranted in several areas, as follows:

- **Crisis Management Training for HOMs.** All HOMs should be provided with training in crisis management at missions.
- **Crisis Response Training for Mission Personnel.** Mission personnel should be provided with crisis response training. The mission-wide mock crisis exercise is a recommended method for such training. Refresher training should be provided as needed.
- **Crisis Response Training for Headquarters Personnel.** Selected headquarters personnel should also be provided with crisis response training.
- **Media Training.** Training in effectively working with the media to inform the Canadian public should be provided to all FAC directors and above and to selected personnel at other levels as warranted.
- **Consular Services Training.** Registrants in the departmental crisis roster flagged for duty in the Consular Operations Centre should be provided with basic training and refresher courses to ensure the right skill sets for this job.

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5.3 Personnel Support

As shown in Table 9, 44 percent of survey respondents said their temporary duty or long hours working on the crisis had a negative impact on their families.

Responses	Number	Percentage
Negative impact on family life	25	44%
Negative mental and physical impact	9	16%
Interrupted or delayed vacation	9	16%
Long hours, lack of sleep	6	10%
Financial loss	3	5%
Loss of relatives/home	2	4%
Other	3	5%
Total responses	57	100%

My wife had to take care of two young daughters alone...(I) worked for 26 days in a row—12 hours a day. The biggest impact might be positive if people recognize our effort.
- Canada-based staff, Bangkok

Mental and physical exhaustion from witnessing your temporary home country devastated, your friends losing everything they have including family members... Having friends and colleagues among the list of missing Canadians.
- Canada-based staff, Colombo

As shown in Table 10, just over half (56%) of survey respondents said they felt adequately supported by FAC. Mission staff in Bangkok, Jakarta and Colombo said they appreciated the trauma counselling provided. However, some who needed it did not get counselling. Twenty-eight percent of survey respondents (most of those on temporary duty) felt they and their families were provided with inadequate support. When they returned they faced a backlog of work and were expected to jump back in to their regular duties.

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Table 10: FAC Support to Staff and Family		
Responses	Number	Percentage
Adequately supported	30	56%
Inadequate support	15	28%
More rewards/recognition	4	8%
Other	4	8%
Total responses	53	100%

FAC was excellent in bringing in a psychologist to deal with those traumatized by the events.
- Canada-based staff, Bangkok

(There was) no follow-up counselling. (I was) waking up in the middle of the night with bad dreams. No one was involved once the TD was over. Some sort of recognition not only for the officers but also for their families would have been welcome.
- Temporary duty officer, Bangkok

Recommendation 5: Enhance personnel support related to crisis response. It is recommended that FAC undertake a review of its human resources policies and procedures as related to crisis response with a view to ensuring adequate support for employees. FAC must be able to administer to staff emotional and/or health requirements stemming from crisis work. Trauma/grief counsellors and other professionals must be available in sufficient numbers to meet needs both at missions and at headquarters. Family members should be included in the potential target audience for these services.

5.4 Rewards and Recognition

In principle, FAC employees working overtime are compensated financially or with extra leave. Like all government departments, FAC has in place an award program recognizing outstanding service. These mechanisms were invoked following the tsunami crisis. However, the magnitude of the crisis led to employee performance beyond what the existing system anticipates. In light of this, various senior managers allocated special, one-time rewards. For example, the Deputy Minister of FAC made conference calls to all affected missions to personally thank staff. The Minister of FAC hosted a

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reception at headquarters for FAC personnel involved in the crisis response. Heads of mission provided extra leave to staff. According to interviewees, all of these measures were appreciated.

However, in some cases rewards were seen as inappropriate or inadequate. For example, interviewees reported that some staff were unable to accept leave because of the amount of work awaiting them at their desks on their return to their normal duties. The lack of recognition of family members – particularly spouses who necessarily bore considerable hardships as a result of the requirements placed on their spouses – was also a concern.

According to survey respondents, differences in compensation policies and practices across government departments were a further irritant. In Colombo, CIC employees were offered leave in Singapore, but FAC staff were not. In Jakarta, FAC staff were provided with additional discretionary leave while there was resistance to this by CIDA headquarters.

In short, current rewards and recognition policies do not take into account the full range of circumstances and extra work requirements associated with crisis situations, and need to be reviewed.

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Recommendation 6: Enhance personnel rewards and recognition related to crisis response. It is recommended that FAC undertake a review of its human resources policies and procedures as related to crisis response with a view to providing fair and equitable compensation for duties undertaken during a crisis. This includes two aspects:

- **Rewards.** The reward system – financial rewards, leave, and other mechanisms – must be adjusted to account for the special circumstances associated with crisis work. Reward allocation must be fair and equitable across all mission staff, regardless of home department, among all affected missions and between headquarters and missions.
- **Recognition.** Recognition practices – awards, personal recognition, letters of commendation, and other mechanisms – must also be adjusted to account for the special circumstances associated with crisis work. Recognition practices must be fair and equitable across all recipients and could include the possibility of special, one-time measures. Family members should also be recognized when warranted.

5.5 External Expertise in Crisis Response

Survey respondents provided extensive and detailed recommendations on how FAC could improve its ability to respond to disasters in the future. As shown in Table 11, more than a third (38%) called for the establishment of a rapid response team of people “selected and trained to be deployed at a moment’s notice to the field.” Such team members would have all inoculations up to date and be “psychologically and physically prepared to travel on short notice.”

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Table 11: Most Important Lessons for FAC		
Responses	Number	Percentage
Need rapid response team	20	38%
Better emergency training & plans	9	17%
Improved communications systems & equipment	6	11%
Improved communications/media relations	3	6%
Increase permanent staff a missions	2	4%
Boardroom that can be converted to operations centre	2	4%
Ensure staff security in disaster area	2	4%
Flexibility with rules & regulations	2	4%
Up-to-date staff phone lists	2	4%
Other	5	9%
Total responses	53	100% *

* Total exceeds 100 due to rounding.

In addition to an FAC internal roster (see Recommendation 3), a second roster is warranted, drawing names from FAC, other government departments, the provinces, territories and municipalities, public and private institutions, and the general public containing qualified potential members of Canadian rapid deployment teams. Roster registrants would be on call on a rotational basis. The skill sets represented on this roster would reflect the complete range of possible needs in any crisis situation. For example, the roster would contain people with skills associated with consular work, medical and forensic requirements, trauma and grief counselling, emergency logistics and administration, and technical and telecommunications systems, military and police requirements, humanitarian and aid relief assistance, political and trade needs, immigration requirements, security requirements, human and financial resources work, crisis management, and communications/media relations work. Country experience and foreign language capabilities would be included among qualifications. Some FAC registrants may be listed on both rosters.

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Recommendation 7: Maintain a roster of Canadian crisis response expertise for rapid deployment. It is recommended that FAC create a roster of pre-qualified individuals from FAC (some of whom may also be on the departmental roster), other government departments, provincial bodies and non-government sectors representing a full range of experience, knowledge and skill sets associated with crisis response willing and available to join rapid deployment teams. Roster registrants may be primarily located in Canada, but mission personnel and Canadians located abroad should also be included to provide capabilities in the regions. In principle, roster registrants must be prepared to depart within 12 hours as part of a rapid deployment team. Sufficient numbers of individuals must be included in the roster to ensure availability of required teams. The roster must be actively maintained with up-to-date registrant qualifications, coordinates and availability status.

5.6 Core Capacity within FAC

The three-person Human Rights, Humanitarian Affairs, and International Women's Equality (AHG) crisis team, particularly its deputy director, played a central role in managing the Government of Canada's response to the tsunami crisis. AGH personnel were among those who worked the longest hours and the most consecutive days. According to interviewees, even during non-crisis periods, AGH is understaffed. AGH team members commonly work 50- to 60-hour weeks. Work associated with the tsunami crisis left no excess capacity in this unit. Illness or absence on the part of an AGH team member, or the advent of a second major disaster, would have created a large gap in FAC's crisis response capacity. As noted previously, FAC is in the process of establishing an ongoing stabilization and reconstruction task force (START) to respond to human-made crises. FAC's crisis unit, whether AGH or a later iteration, will always have a central role to play in responding to international emergencies. It is crucial that adequate capacity, with some redundancy, be available in this regard.

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Recommendation 8: Strengthen and consolidate the departmental crisis

response unit. It is recommended that FAC undertake a review of its dedicated human resource requirements respecting crisis response. This exercise should be carried out in the context of the establishment of the START. The Department's crisis response and management core capacities for natural and human-made disasters should, ideally, be integrated and thus able to respond to natural and human-made disasters and emergencies. The organization should be staffed at a level ensuring capacity during large and prolonged crises, including enough redundancy to handle staff illnesses or other absences, multiple crises and other potential unforeseen circumstances.

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6. FAC'S CAPACITY TO RESPOND: STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS RESPECTING CONSULAR OPERATIONS

The operational area within FAC typically having the most to do in international crisis situations is the Consular Bureau, and more particularly the Consular Affairs Emergency Division (JPE). Not unlike the staff of AGH, the core staff of JPE was stretched by the tsunami crisis. The large number of volunteers who came to work in the Consular Operations Centre absorbed huge proportions of the consular workload at headquarters. Indeed, the job of providing consular services in Canada would have been impossible without the volunteer contingent. However, the contingent placed an additional burden on JPE core staff who were called upon to train and coordinate volunteers. JPE was also called upon daily (sometimes hourly) to supply updates on the disposition of affected Canadians in order to provide media outlets with the information they wanted and to support the larger Government of Canada public communication effort. Managers were forced to take considerable time away from the crisis itself to meet these needs. It is essential that JPE have adequate human resources in order to effectively and efficiently manage FAC's consular services in Canada at a time of crisis.

Recommendation 9: Strengthen core capacity of Consular Affairs Emergency Services Division related to crisis response. It is recommended that FAC undertake a review of its human resource requirements within the Consular Operations Centre to ensure adequate core capacity in a crisis.

An overflow room with 14 extra telephone lines had to be set up adjacent to the headquarters Consular Operations Centre and clearing and equipping this room took several days. During the crisis the absence of a back up server in the Consular Operations Centre was the cause of considerable anxiety. Consular services, including communications between missions and headquarters, relied heavily on SIGNET and MITNET. These systems are dependant on reliable telephone connections. Users must have a valid password. Both of these conditions open the system to a risk of failure when TD and other new users must use the system and when the affected country's infrastructure is questionable.

A new consular system has been developed (with Canada's help) to overcome these difficulties. Called CRISES, the system has all of the functionality of FAC's current system (COSMOS) with the additional advantage of being able to function in the field using the Internet. Unlike COSMOS, CRISES easily generates the kinds of reports

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required during a consular emergency. According to interviewees, CRISES represents the next generation of consular crisis software. It has already been adopted by several other countries.

Recommendation 10: Enhance Consular Operations Centre. The Consular Operations Centre requires capacity to respond to major crises. This includes rapidly accessible, fully equipped workstations in adequate numbers and appropriately arrayed. The Centre requires a reliable backup computer system. The Centre requires consular management software that is user-friendly, accessible from remote locations without SIGNET, and can easily generate statistical reports.

7. FAC'S CAPACITY TO RESPOND: STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS RESPECTING TECHNICAL SYSTEMS, INFRASTRUCTURE AND EQUIPMENT

7.1 Physical Plant

Generally speaking, FAC's buildings – embassies and headquarters – were built, and are fitted up and equipped, to conduct the normal business of international relations. Of course, the buildings adhere to Canadian safety codes but, beyond that, few emergency response features exist. The exception to this rule is the Consular Operations Centre in the Lester B. Pearson building.

The tsunami crisis highlighted limitations inherent in this approach. For example the telephone systems at some of Canada's missions in the affected regions were inadequate to the task of handling the high volume of calls during the crisis. Embassies vary in their physical capacity to house crisis teams.

The Lester B. Pearson building, owing to its large size, contains most of the features needed in a crisis situation. However, the features are not necessarily conveniently clustered or easily accessible by non-technical staff. A simple failing of the building during the tsunami crisis was an inability to supply nourishing meals to personnel during off hours.

Using my (other mission) SIGNET account was hopelessly ineffective. New SIGNET accounts that connect to local servers need to be created very quickly. Access to COSMOS was only granted if requested by the TD officers. This should have been done automatically.

- Temporary duty officer, Bangkok

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Recommendation 11: Enhance departmental crisis response facilities and systems. In addition to the Consular Operations Centre, it is recommended that the Department undertake a review of its physical facilities at headquarters and at missions in regards to crisis management:

- **Crisis Management.** The Lester B. Pearson building must be capable of effectively hosting interdepartmental task force meetings and housing emergency personnel 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Meeting facilities must provide direct access to crisis information and ample means of outside communication. Privacy and security must be ensured where needed. The facilities review should assess the most cost-effective means to include overnight accommodations and meal preparation capabilities.
- **Mission Crisis Management Capabilities.** Missions, particularly those in high-risk locations, must be adequately equipped to handle crises. Sufficient telephone lines and other telecommunications systems and hardware as well as secure crisis management facilities are especially important.

7.2 Portable Crisis Equipment and Supplies

While the most important ingredients in an effective crisis response are a good set of operating procedures and a team of good people, having the right equipment enables people to more easily fulfill their duties. The tsunami crisis highlighted this fact, particularly in the case of TD personnel. TD personnel arriving on site with working cell phones and laptops placed far less of a burden on mission staff. Well-equipped TD personnel “hit the ground running.”

Unfortunately, there were numerous cases of equipment shortages or malfunctions. According to interviewees, problems included the following: there was a general shortage of cell and satellite telephones; cell phones and Blackberries do not work in some regions (e.g., Sri Lanka); brownouts were frequent preventing the use of equipment requiring power; and many locations, particularly remote locations, have either slow or no internet connections. Interviewees and survey respondents noted that electronic and communications equipment should be capable of operating without power, telephone/Internet connections, and/or cell phone/Blackberry capability. Pre-packed kits should be modular, built around a core collection of essentials and including various additional collections of items for use depending upon the nature and location of the emergency.

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TD personnel may also require, depending on the assignment, a laptop loaded with necessary software including selected forms, a printer, and such basic supplies as water purification tablets, first aid supplies, a sleeping bag and mat, gloves, and a camera.

TD personnel also typically require vaccinations, travel documents, and money.

During the tsunami crisis the Bangkok mission deployed its emergency office kit containing such items as a generator, cots, computers, and telecommunications equipment. This was put in place at one of Canada's satellite offices on the west coast of Thailand. The set proved to be extremely useful.

As described earlier, Canada sent several planeloads of emergency supplies. These were drawn from several sources including the emergency stockpile maintained at the Trenton Air Force Base by the Canadian Red Cross and the National Emergency Stockpile System. These stockpiles contain equipment adhering to international standards associated with relief work (e.g., certified foodstuffs, and 64 collapsible water bladders each holding 6,000 liters and having regulation size hose connectors). The tsunami crisis came close to depleting these stockpiles which take 14 days to replenish. For future crises, Canada would be better prepared by having more such stockpiles in Canada, and perhaps in selected regions around the globe.

Each of these people (in a rapid response team) should have available to them a DISA card, a Laptop computer, a PSAT phone and a pre-packed box or briefcase of basic office supplies including a CD ROM with copies of standard correspondence that may be required in the event of an emergency (i.e. examples of letters of facilitation, etc.). A small portable printer is also quite useful.

- Temporary duty officer, Bangkok

One fundamental weakness of mission plans is the false assumption that the "disaster/crisis" will occur in the city where the embassy is located...In the early hours of the crisis we would have benefited from more reliable means of communications namely modern satellite phones.

- Canada-based staff, Bangkok

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Recommendation 12: Ensure availability of adequate crisis response

equipment. It is recommended that FAC undertake a review of its supplies of emergency equipment to ensure availability of:

- **Temporary Duty / Rapid Deployment Team Kits.** Kits are required in sufficient numbers at headquarters and at missions to enable FAC and other designated personnel taking part in temporary duty missions or joining rapid deployment teams to depart within 12 hours and to land on the ground fully equipped to provide required assistance without burdening the embassy or relying on local infrastructures.
- **Satellite Office Sets.** Sets of equipment are required in sufficient numbers at headquarters and at missions to enable the establishment of satellite offices either at the site of a disaster or to substitute for a disabled embassy.

Recommendation 13: Ensure availability of adequate crisis response

stockpiles. It is recommended that FAC, in consultation with domestic partners such as the Canadian Red Cross, the Public Health Agency of Canada and Health Partners International, and with other donor countries, review current disaster relief stockpiles available to Canada, both within our borders and abroad, to ensure adequate supplies.

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8. FAC'S CAPACITY TO RESPOND: MEDIA RELATIONS

One aspect of the crisis for which FAC and the Government were less prepared was the enormous interest on the part of Canadians in Canada's response. The appetite for information exceeded the ability of the system to provide fully coordinated messages. The Minister of Defense provided regular updates to the media as the Government's main spokesperson. With the Minister of Foreign Affairs out of the country (initially in Europe and then in the affected region), the Department was represented to the media primarily by a designated official. FAC also provided to the media and to Parliamentarians up-to-date Qs & As, and FAC officials provided technical briefings on a daily basis during the peak period. The Minister authorized HOMs to speak directly to the press, thereby providing another source of information for Canadians. By mid-January, FAC had established a dedicated single-window tsunami website.

These efforts, undertaken in collaboration with the PMO and PCO, constituted the main system through which the Government provided information to the media and to Canadians. Other departments, Ministers, and Members of Parliament also interacted on a regular basis with the media. Among other key messages conveyed to the Canadian public were those respecting the 1-800 consular services telephone number and the mechanisms through which Canadians could donate money to the relief effort. Ministers were also consistent in appealing to Canadians to give funds rather than material goods.

As a result of the high amount of information traffic, messages were at times inconsistent. Because of the time difference, HOMs were sometimes asked by media in the region to comment on issues before being adequately briefed by headquarters. DND spokespersons commented frequently on issues related to the DART, at times creating impressions somewhat at odds with central messages. There were also problems in translating press releases; according to interviewees the francophone press was less well served than the anglophone press. Few attempts were made to effectively liaise with the ethnic press in Canada.

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Handling the media deluge is also important as missions are often criticized in the press for not doing enough – Ensuring the media has information and access to the facts helped quell misinformation and ensure they concentrated on the real story (the devastation) and not focus on faulting the Government for something.

- Canada-based staff, Colombo

On the media side we had to play catch up/repair and we should have been more visible and proactive from the beginning.

- Temporary duty officer, Colombo

The most common criticism leveled by interviewees in analyzing Canada's response to the tsunami crisis concerned what appeared at times to be a negative or ambivalent impression among some members of the Canadian public respecting the actions of the Government. This contrasts sharply with what interviewees know about the level of effort and success associated with the performance of officials at headquarters and missions from FAC and other departments and agencies. Notwithstanding the 79 percent approval rating of the Prime Minister's actions in early January, many instances were cited of Canadian criticisms respecting such issues as telephone waiting times, an inability to locate a missing person, and inefficient use of funds. Interviewees felt that Canadians did not hear enough about what Canada was doing and why Canada was doing it. The complexities associated with playing an effective role in a multilateral humanitarian relief effort as well as the sheer enormity of the task faced by public servants and the wider crisis team were inadequately conveyed to Canadians.

The lack of a coordinated center of media relations and messaging led to situations where the Government was placed in a reactive mode in attempting to defend a specific action or position or to explain perceived inconsistencies among statements made by different departments and agencies. Interviewees suggested that in future a proactive approach be taken, characterized by strong leadership and consistent messaging. This approach would use such features as twice daily press conferences to reassure Canadians with connections in the affected region, to describe in straightforward terms the appropriate measures being taken by the Government, and to outline how Canada is helping the affected nation(s). Daily technical briefings would be used to explain in more detail Canada's response. Regular press releases, Qs & As, and MP kits and parliamentary briefings would ensure consistent messages across all departments and agencies.

As a rule, Canada's response to natural disasters is coordinated with the efforts of other countries. This multilateral approach is a significant feature of Canada's crisis system and was used, to advantage, during the tsunami crisis. However, because this approach

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does not have a Canadian flag attached to it, Canada may have appeared less active and committed than it is in reality. Sometimes the very actions proposed in the press to show an active Canadian involvement – for instance getting our own assessment team on the ground – are the sort of thing that best practices have shown as less effective. In order to ensure an informed press that can effectively inform the Canadian public, a pre-packaged information kit that outlines how Canada responds to natural disasters and details the elements of our national and international toolkit is required.

At a certain point in the crisis the Government came under pressure, particularly from media outlets, to release the names of Canadian casualties. While it had no firm policy on this question, FAC decided to refuse media requests for this information and to keep confidential the identities of victims. This was the right approach, based on the reaction of affected families to this decision.

Recommendation 14: Strengthen media and public relations. It is recommended that FAC review its media relations capacity in regards to international crisis response. FAC must be capable of playing a leadership role in coordinating the Government of Canada's communications with the media and the Canadian public. A pre-packaged information kit outlining how Canada responds to disasters as part of the international community is a critical element of this capacity. This also includes, during a crisis, the regular, proactive provision of information on, and explanations of, Canada's response presented accurately, constructively and in both official languages. It also includes ensuring the consistency of messages and information across all government departments and agencies. This could also include maintaining a dedicated website providing up-to-the-minute crisis information to Canadians. In non-crisis periods ROCA should be more effectively promoted among travelling Canadians.

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9. BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

On balance, taking into account the full spectrum of circumstances and activities affecting and comprising Canada's response, what are the best practices and lessons that can be taken from the tsunami crisis? First, the system works. Canada's approach has been developed and honed over the years in harmony with the international system. In situations of natural disaster, Canada is well equipped to both address the needs of Canadians and to contribute to coordinated multilateral relief efforts. In the case of the December 26, 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami crisis, FAC and CIDA played central roles. FAC focused on fulfilling its mandate respecting the provision of consular services to Canadians and coordinating the whole of Government response. CIDA effectively administered a large program of humanitarian aid. Both organizations, working through Canada's missions, working with other Government departments and agencies, and working directly with representatives of the UN, the Red Cross, and NGOs, ensured an integrated, effective, Canadian response.

While, in a such a complex situation involving so many interwoven factors, it is difficult to single out specific best practices, the present analysis points to seven aspects of Canada's international humanitarian disaster response system that clearly contributed to Canada's success in responding to the tsunami crisis, as follows:

- **Established Relations.** Key functions within the primary responding departments and agencies, by and large, had strong pre-existing working relationships with one another. The best example of this is the relationship between FAC's Human Rights, Humanitarian Affairs, and International Women's Equality (AGH) Division and CIDA's International Humanitarian Assistance (IHA) Program. However, many additional relationships exist, including relationships among other Government departments (OGDs) and with the UN, the Red Cross and NGOs. These relationships smoothed the way for a rapid response.
- **Established Procedures.** The SOPs, mission emergency plans, and a good deal of practice in crisis response constitute a well established set of core procedures defining most of the response to almost any international natural disaster. The existence of these established procedures allowed personnel to move quickly beyond basic tasks, without having to re-invent the wheel, and concentrate on solving the unique problems associated with the situation at hand.
- **Consular Operations Centre.** The Consular Operations Centre was put through an extreme test during the tsunami crisis and fully measured up, opening and resolving an unprecedented number of cases. While there are some areas in

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need of enhancement (see below), the Operations Centre was key ingredient in the Government's successful crisis response.

- **Leadership.** It must be stated that while Canada's procedures and facilities enabled a successful response, it was the effective actions of those who took a leadership role during the crisis that activated and put into motion the crisis response machinery and developed innovative solutions to problems as they arose.
- **Daily Heads of Mission Conference Calls.** Three practices, invoked early in the response and maintained through the entire crisis period, were responsible for overlaying onto the process needed discipline and predictability. The first of these was the daily conference call convened by the Deputy Minister of FAC with Heads of Missions (HOMs). These calls served to inform in both directions and provide a basis for the day's decisions.
- **Daily Interdepartmental Task Force Meetings.** Deputy Minister of FAC also convened a daily meeting of the interdepartmental task force – senior personnel representing all involved government departments and agencies. Lasting no more than one hour, the daily interdepartmental task force meetings ensured that everyone was on board and produced the decisions that guided Canada's response.
- **Daily Situation Reports.** Each day AGH summarized information from the missions, the daily interdepartmental task force meetings, the media, and other sources in at least one situation report, or "sitrep" (on some days there were two). The sitreps were widely circulated and ensured that all involved parties had comprehensive information, and that the same information was received by all.

Every disaster brings with it novel circumstances requiring flexibility, and possibly engendering innovative solutions, on the part of the Government of Canada. Owing to its large size, the tsunami crisis brought many such challenges. These typically had one of two effects; either a practice was developed which proved effective and therefore warrants institutionalizing and repeating when appropriate, or the challenge was not fully or effectively addressed but exposed a weakness that can be dealt with in future with the proper attention. In the present report, both types of challenges fed into the recommendations as either something to keep or something to fix. Looking first at innovations that came to the fore during the response to the tsunami crisis that worked, and therefore bear repeating, the following constitute additional best practices:

- **Large Voluntary Contingent.** Many FAC personnel volunteered for additional service either in the Consular Operations Centre at headquarters or for temporary duty (TD) at an affected mission. This phenomenon was responsible for much of the success of the Operations Centre, and assisted missions

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immeasurably. Recommendations 3 and 4 relate to formalizing FAC personnel extra assistance by maintaining an internal roster and providing training.

- **Effective Human Resources Management.** In relation to the preceding item, the Human Resources Branch played a significant role in selecting and assigning extra personnel. Recommendation 1 speaks to the issue of adding the Human Resources Branch to the crisis team described in the SOPs.
- **Effective Financial Management.** Owing to the inordinately large and unusual expenditures associated with Canada's response to the tsunami crisis, the Corporate Finance, Planning and Systems Bureau (SMD) played a significant role in ensuring that proper rules and authorities were followed. Recommendation 1 speaks to the issue of also adding the SMD to the crisis team described in the SOPs.
- **RCMP Forensic Team.** When the UN asked countries to contribute to the Interpol-led effort to identify bodies, the RCMP came forward with an experienced forensic team. The team became one of Canada's most visible and successful contributions to the multilateral crisis response. Recommendation 2 speaks to the issue of developing a prearranged agreement with the RCMP in anticipation of future such needs.
- **Disaster Assistance Response Team.** Although not mentioned specifically in the SOPs, the existence of the Department of National Defence (DND) Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) was known and became an item for discussion early on. Ultimately the DART was deployed to Sri Lanka with successful results. Recommendation 1 speaks to the issue of adding to the SOPs guidance on DART deployment. Recommendation 2 speaks to the issue of developing a prearranged agreement with DND in anticipation of future use of the DART.
- **Mission Satellite Office Equipment.** During the crisis the Bangkok mission deployed its portable office to a satellite location. This measure proved useful and, because the equipment was preassembled, relatively easy to do. Recommendation 12 speaks to the value of creating additional such equipment sets to be kept at other missions.

The following areas were exposed during the tsunami as warranting remedial action:

- **Procedural Guidance.** While the SOPs are relatively comprehensive, there were a number of domains where the SOPs did not provide wanted instructions including, for example, guidance as to the authorities of HOMs, and templates and checklists for common reports, correspondence and procedures. These

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kinds of items can be easily anticipated and created in generic form in advance, saving time during a crisis. Recommendation 1 speaks to this issue.

- **Prearranged agreements.** In addition to prearranged agreements with the RCMP and DND, as noted above, the system would have benefited with a number of other such agreements, including memoranda of understanding (MOUs) pertaining to, for example, the transportation of personnel and goods, the use of stockpiles, and obtaining additional equipment and supplies. Recommendation 2 pertains to the negotiation, in anticipation of future crises, of agreements with other government departments, municipalities, NGOs and the private sector.
- **Media Relations.** The number of media requests was overwhelming during the tsunami crisis leading to a lack of consistency in messages and a failure, at times, to effectively communicate to Canadians the work and accomplishments of the Government of Canada. Recommendation 14 pertains to this challenge.
- **Core Strength of the Crisis Response Unit.** AGH performed its role ably during the tsunami crisis. However, its core capacities were stretched beyond reasonable limits. Recommendation 8 speaks to the issue of strengthening the Department's core crisis management capacity, integrating response capabilities respecting natural international disasters with response capabilities respecting human-made international disasters.
- **Core Strength and Facilities and Systems of the Consular Operations Centre.** The Consular Operations Centre also performed ably, as noted above. The Centre's capacities, too, were over-stretched. Recommendations 9 and 10 pertain to strengthening both the human resources complement and the physical features of the Centre.
- **Rapid Deployment Team.** The Government of Canada had mission personnel on the ground, sent a reconnaissance team, and sent various other teams and personnel (e.g., medical personnel, grief counsellors, and TD mission staff) to the region during the crisis. This was done on an ad hoc basis. Other countries have begun the practice of maintaining rosters of pre-qualified personnel available on short notice to comprise first-in, rapid deployment teams (RDTs) assembled as needed to provide the necessary set of skills befitting the situation. Recommendation 7 pertains to the assembly of a list of Canadians from across the country constituting a Canadian RDT roster.
- **Personnel Support.** Despite earnest efforts on the part of FAC, the review found that available emotional support and reward and recognition systems for employees involved in the crisis response – an extreme event – fell short. Recommendations 5 and 6 speak to this concern.

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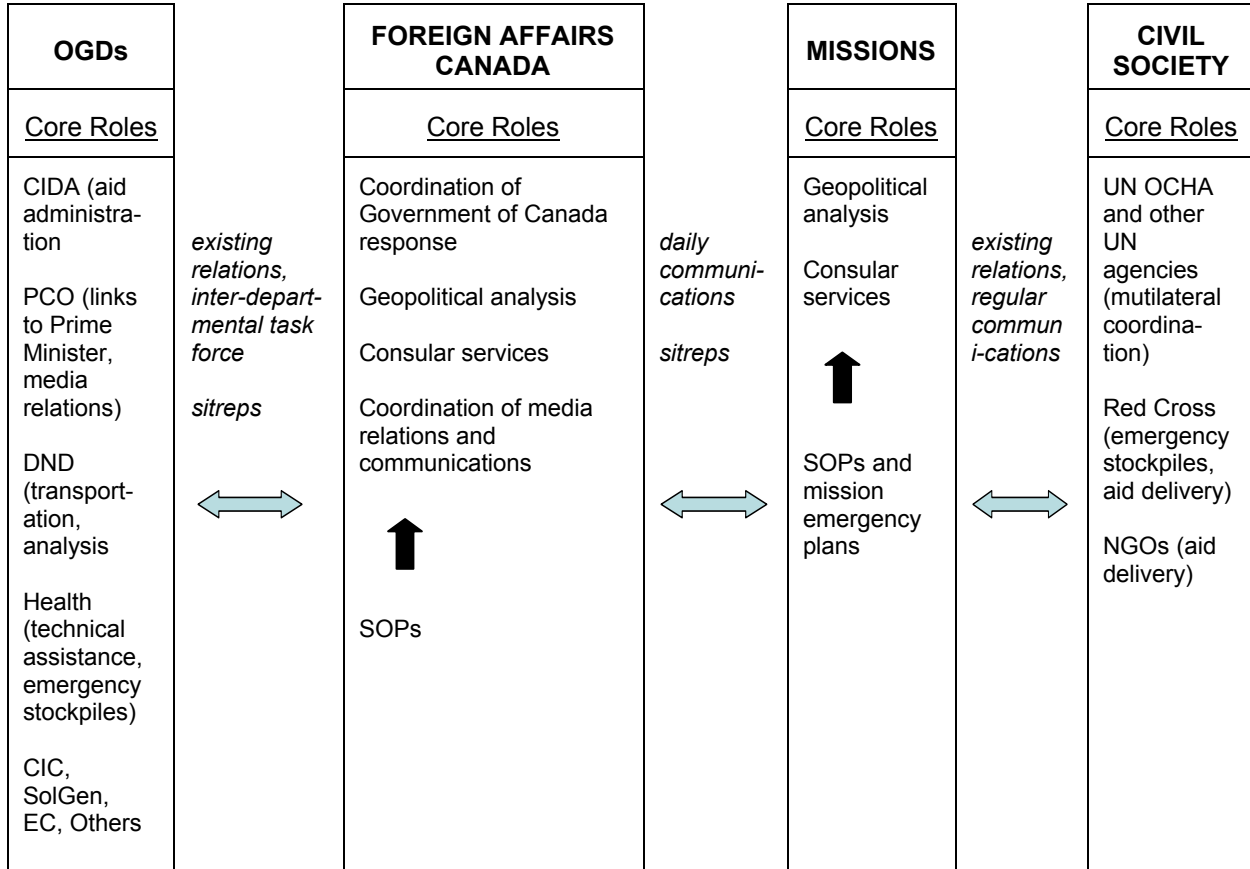
- **Fixed Facilities and Systems.** In addition to the Consular Operations Centre, as noted above, the physical features of both the headquarters building and embassies were found lacking in some respects (e.g., telecommunications capacities, equipped meeting rooms, and amenities for after hours work). Recommendation 11 pertains to this issue.
- **Portable Equipment.** Two categories of portable equipment are useful in a crisis situation. One category, as noted above, includes equipment suitable for the establishment of a temporary office or mission. This is crucial in situations where either the crisis is at a location removed from the mission site or where the disaster has disabled the embassy itself. The other category includes the equipment needed by TD personnel and RDT members to hit the ground running without burdening the mission (e.g., telecommunications equipment, first aid supplies, computer, printer, etc.). Recommendation 12 speaks to this concern.

The existing system was built to respond to natural disasters. However, the present analysis suggests that with the enhancements prescribed in the recommendations and with appropriate collaboration, a single system can and should serve to respond to both natural and human-made international disasters. As the stabilization and reconstruction task force (START) becomes established, the Department is advised to integrate these two regimes into a single system built upon the existing foundation.

Every future crisis will present its own set of conditions and challenges. Being well prepared with respect to the full range of predictable, common requirements and issues will free FAC personnel and personnel representing other involved departments and agencies to focus on mobilization and problem solving. By way of summary, Figure 2 depicts the main components and relationships comprising Canada's existing natural disaster response system accompanied by a listing of the extra measures, roles and challenges ("Extra Roles, Needs") invoked and experienced during the tsunami crisis response. Recommendations stemming from the present review ("R1," "R2," "R3," ...) are included in the figure along side the challenges they address.

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Figure 2: Critical Analysis of Canada's International Natural Disaster Response System



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*Lessons from the Tsunami: Review of the Response of
Foreign Affairs Canada to the December 26, 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami Crisis*

OGDs	FOREIGN AFFAIRS CANADA	MISSIONS	CIVIL SOCIETY
<p><u>Extra Roles, Needs</u></p> <p>DND - DART (R1, R2)</p> <p>RCMP (R2)</p> <p>MOUs and pre-arrangements (R2)</p>	<p><u>Extra Roles, Needs</u></p> <p>More explicit guidance and templates in SOPs (R1)</p> <p>Pre-arrangements to send aid, personal, supplies, etc. (R2, R13)</p> <p>More proactive media relations (R14)</p> <p>Financial management (R1)</p> <p>Strengthened Consular Operations Centre - staffing (core and extra), facilities and systems (R9, R3, R4, R10)</p> <p>On-call and extra crisis personnel - coordination, well-equipped TD and RDTs, training (R3, R4, R7, R12)</p> <p>Support and recognition for crisis personnel (R5, R6)</p> <p>Headquarters facilities and systems (R11)</p>	<p><u>Extra Roles, Needs</u></p> <p>More explicit guidance and templates in SOPs (R1)</p> <p>Extra staffing - well-equipped TD, RDTs, training (R3, R4, R7, R12)</p> <p>Support and recognition for crisis personnel (R5, R6)</p> <p>Mission facilities and systems, and satellite office equipment (R11, R12)</p>	<p><u>Extra Roles, Needs</u></p> <p>Integration of Provincial, Territorial, Municipal contributions (R2)</p> <p>Pre-arrangements with NGOs and private suppliers (R2)</p>

As noted at the outset of the report, many countries have chosen to draw from this unprecedented crisis lessons to be used in improving their ability to respond to international disasters in the future. Canada can both contribute to, and learn from, other countries as we move forward.

Recommendation 15: It is recommended that FAC take the lead role in ensuring the effective exchange of best practices with like-minded countries respecting international disaster response.

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10. CONCLUSION: BOLSTERING CANADA'S PREPAREDNESS

The nature, location and size of the tsunami crisis combined to create a unique situation, unlikely to be repeated. Good SOPs, extraordinary efforts on the part of Government of Canada personnel, cooperation among organizations within Canada and internationally, strong leadership, political will, and a bit of luck enabled Canada to respond in a timely, generous, needs-driven manner.

There were significant challenges. Human resources were over taxed. Some technical systems were weak. There was uncertainty regarding protocols and authorities. There was a high level of scrutiny from media and some Canadian's expectations were unduly high. There were problems associated with transportation and equipment. Staff suffered from the effects of the crisis and from overwork.

Yet, Canada can take pride in its overall response. The performance of officials – their agility, innovation and sheer dedication to the task – was extraordinary. Consular services were quickly and effectively delivered to Canadians in the region and to their friends and relatives in Canada. The Government of Canada contributed generously to humanitarian relief and reconstruction and placed a moratorium on debt owed to Canada by affected countries. Substantial quantities of emergency supplies were sent to the region. The RCMP forensic team played a central role in the international effort to identify bodies. The DART provided needed services in Sri Lanka. And the Prime Minister and several other ministers personally visited the area pledging Canada's support and offering condolences.

The crisis stretched the limits of the Department's systems. Normal duties were neglected, and it will take some time to recover. Had another disaster occurred during the tsunami crisis Canada would have been hard pressed to muster additional resources.

Perhaps the overall lesson is that where reliable preparations, systems and procedures were in place, Canada's response was effective and efficient. Key players knew what was required, had access to the tools they needed, and performed their duties ably and fully. Where preparations were inadequate, some innovative solutions were developed, but there were false starts, errors, near misses and inefficiencies. Investment in crisis preparation paid off.

The next crisis is impossible to predict. It may be natural or human-made. It may involve terrorism or other threats to security. It may be in a developing country but not necessarily, and the country may or may not be one with which Canada enjoys strong

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and friendly relations. It may involve Canadian casualties in greater or lesser numbers. We cannot know how other countries may react; it may depend upon their military or economic interests in the area. And we may be struck by more than one crisis at the same time.

We cannot predict, but we can be prepared. As a G8 country widely engaged around the world, Canada needs to be ready to take a lead role in responding to future international crises. Canada needs a robust, sophisticated and flexible system aligned with our values and general foreign policy objectives. The system needs built-in redundancies and the capability to support an effective response to one or more simultaneous crises covering a wide range of possibilities. As with any capacity designed for occasional use, FAC's crisis response mechanisms – both personnel and facilities and systems – can be devoted to other duties and purposes during non-emergency periods.

International emergency response systems and procedures must contain enough flexibility so as not to stifle innovation. Rather than rules and constraints, the system should be characterized by tools and enabling mechanisms.

The current system provides a solid foundation. The next step is to bolster the depth and range of Canada's preparedness, knowing what we now know, to maximize our chances of an even more successful response next time.

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APPENDIX A: MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

The Government of Canada (GoC), together with the Canadian public, responded in an overwhelming manner to the Indian Ocean Tsunami of December 26, 2004. Some \$425 million was committed by the GoC to relief and reconstruction efforts in the region, making Canada the seventh-largest bilateral donor in overall terms.

In the interest of further strengthening Canada's response to future crises, it was essential to evaluate the activities undertaken by the GoC in responding to the Indian Ocean Tsunami to identify lessons learned and best practices and to recommend improvements to better meet future crises. Overall, this evaluation suggests that the GoC responded in a timely and effective fashion to meet the needs identified as a result of the disaster, despite clear strains placed on human resources. Coordination of efforts during the crisis was well executed, primarily based on the strength of existing management structures and procedures. The GoC response was a whole of government effort, where many Ministers were involved and a group of dedicated civil servants, working with provinces and territories, international organizations and non-governmental actors, responded robustly to one of the worst natural disasters in decades.

The Department of Foreign Affairs agrees with the best practices identified and the recommendations put forth in the evaluation report. This crisis demonstrated that planning, coordination and other investments in disaster preparedness significantly enhanced our capacity to respond. Lessons learned from earlier crises helped us respond more effectively to the Tsunami Crisis.

The Department commits to maintaining or expanding existing best practices identified in the report, a few of which we wish to highlight in our response:

- ***Established Relations.*** Key functions within the primary responding departments and agencies, by and large, had strong pre-existing working relationships with one another. These relationships smoothed the way for a rapid response.
- ***Established Procedures.*** The existence of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), mission emergency plans, and a good deal of practice in crisis response by core officials allowed personnel to move quickly beyond basic tasks.
- ***Leadership.*** While Canada's procedures and facilities enabled a successful response, it was through early and effective leadership that the response

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machinery was put to best use and innovative solutions to problems were identified.

- **Effective coordination.** Three coordination practices invoked early and maintained through the entire crisis period, were responsible for overlaying onto the process needed discipline and predictability. The first of these was the daily conference call convened by the Deputy Minister of FAC with Heads of Missions (HOMs). These calls served to inform in both directions and provide a basis for the day's decisions. The Deputy Minister of FAC also convened a daily meeting of the interdepartmental task force. Lasting no more than one hour, the meetings ensured that everyone was on board and produced the decisions that guided Canada's response. In addition, each day, FAC summarized information from the missions, the daily interdepartmental task force meetings, the media, and other sources in at least one daily situation report (sitrep). The sitreps were widely circulated and ensured that all involved parties had comprehensive information, and that the same information was received by all.

While the Department responded well, this crisis pointed to a number of areas that require strengthening. Action has already been taken in updating our emergency procedures, in strengthening and integrating the Departmental Humanitarian Crisis Response Unit with the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force, and in enhancing the physical facilities and computer systems of the Consular Operations Centre. Further actions and commitments are detailed below.

The Department's detailed response to the evaluation recommendations follow below.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Update the Government of Canada SOPs incorporating lessons learned from the tsunami crisis focusing particularly on: the crisis management team; timing of critical decisions; reconnaissance missions and the DART; financial rules; checklists and templates; and, partnerships with the Canadian Red Cross, other NGOs and UN agencies.

Management Commitments/Actions:

Developed some six years ago, the Government of Canada Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for responding to natural disasters abroad are designed to streamline standard actions in response to a major crisis and to anticipate turn over in staff amongst the various stakeholder units and organizations. The SOPs are continuously revised to reflect lessons identified following major disasters and

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disseminated to all relevant Government of Canada stakeholders. Consistent with its mandate to ensure a timely and effective whole of government response to natural disasters abroad, these updates are done by the Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Response Group (IRH/GHA) of Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC), and reflect analysis undertaken by that unit, and input received from other FAC divisions, Canadian missions abroad and other government departments.

The SOPs were revised between mid-March and May 2005 to incorporate the lessons identified from the tsunami and those following the 2004 hurricane season. This update includes several new annexes which incorporate revised communications templates, including an updated webpage outlining “how Canadians can help” in response to emergencies and disasters abroad; and outreach templates to be used with officials from affected foreign governments, including condolence letters. Incident reporting templates have been improved to consolidate consular and political reporting from Missions. The SOPs now also include additional FAC focal points, such as an on-call web content manager to improve timely communication with the public, and a broader range of government contacts in the event specific expertise must be drawn upon at short notice. In addition, a checklist was developed to assist emergency coordination teams at Canadian missions abroad, and which provides reminders of key issues to assess before, during and after a natural disaster. Finally, a one page checklist was developed for FAC geographic desk officers, so that they could quickly and easily recall what their responsibilities would be in the event of a natural disaster in a country under their responsibility, and what support they can expect from IRH/GHA and other FAC functional divisions. In anticipation of the 2005 Hurricane and Monsoon Season, the documents were forwarded to all Missions and headquarters’ divisions in June 2005. They are posted on the FAC intranet and are regularly circulated to partners at the outset of a new natural disaster as a standard good practice.

Crisis Management Team: The FAC departmental crisis management team includes representatives from Human Resources and Corporate units. This has helped strengthen organizational coordination during the responses to the hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico and the Pakistan earthquake in the autumn of 2005.

Reconnaissance Missions and the Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART): Given the contributions Canada makes to standing disaster response and assessment teams such as the UN’s Disaster Assessment and Coordination Teams, it is not recommended that the Government unilaterally deploy reconnaissance missions to the field except in exceptional circumstances. It is clear that reconnaissance missions are necessary prior to the deployment of Canadian Forces assets. Specific lessons were identified from the inter-departmental reconnaissance mission deployed to Indonesia and Sri Lanka, and new procedures have been identified to help streamline efforts and better incorporate these issues into the SOPs.

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Partnerships with UN agencies, the Red Cross/Crescent Movement and NGOs:

The Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Response Group (IRH/GHA) working in close partnership with CIDA's Humanitarian Assistance, Peace and Security Division (HAPS), have maintained a regular and on-going dialogue with the United Nations, Red Cross and NGO partners following the tsunami. This dialogue has been aimed at sharing lessons identified, and clarifying what actions can be taken to improve preparedness and response efforts. Canada's experiences from the tsunami have fed into the UN Humanitarian Response Review, and the Government of Canada is participating in a series of multi-agency, multi-donor evaluations of the international tsunami response coordinated by the Overseas Development Institute's Active Learning and Accountability Program (ALNAP). Further discussions are expected with the Canadian Red Cross to specifically discuss the GoC Standard Operating Procedures.

Recommendation 2: With other government departments and agencies, provinces, other Canadian partners, and international bodies, establish pre-approvals and agreements related to crisis response.

Management Commitments/Actions:

FAC, CIDA and the Department of National Defence have continued their regular dialogue aimed at enhancing the Government's disaster response capacities. Following on the lessons identified during inter-departmental discussions on the tsunami and hurricane season, efforts were made to further develop standard approaches to requesting and utilizing Canadian Forces airlift in support of relief efforts, and identifying other Canadian Forces assets that may be drawn upon in a disaster context, including dialogue on the Disaster Assistance Response Team. These discussions have been very fruitful, particularly for the reinforcement of the DART's stabilization and medium term response capacity, and are on-going.

FAC, the Transportation Safety Board and the Canada Border Services Agency met in August 2005 to discuss a MOU to share passenger information from incoming international flights which can be used to confirm safe return of Canadians to Canada following crises abroad and to inform the diplomatic community should some of their nationals be involved in a domestic air accident. An agreement was reached and CBSA undertook to prepare and circulate a draft MOU. A senior officer has also been assigned to the Consular Affairs Bureau to assist in the preparation of MOUs with RCMP, DND and Air Canada. The target completion date for these MOUs is June 2006.

Dialogue between FAC, CIDA, and the Public Health Agency has also been expanded to clarify areas of responsibility and potential collaboration. There has also been a

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series of discussions with Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada on the shared responsibilities for responding to disasters in North America.

Recommendation 3: Maintain a roster of internal departmental crisis response expertise able and willing to undertake on short notice crisis response related duties at headquarters or temporary duty at missions. A “first response” list of personnel qualified to make up a core crisis response management team should be maintained on-call on a 24 hours a day, seven days a week basis.

Management Commitments/Actions:

The Consular Affairs Bureau (CND) has prepared a Crisis Management Action Plan, which is an integral part of the Consular Strategy for the Future presented to the Executive Committee in June 2005. This document outlines a plan to improve the ability to respond to crises abroad both by increasing human resources, technical and physical capacity at HQ and also to create, train and equip multi-disciplinary rapid deployment teams. These documents, as well as the action plan, have been shared with Human Resources Branch’s Assignments and Executive Management Bureau (HFD), and Stabilization and Reconstruction Taskforce (IRD) to support or complement similar activities in those areas.

The Assignments and Executive Management Bureau (HFD), in consultation with the Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Response Division (IRH/GHA) and Consular Bureau’s Emergency Services Division (CNE), is identifying a team of consular, political and communications experts who can be deployed on short notice to crisis/disaster situations. The team would support and augment existing mission capacities, or establish a GoC presence where it may not exist or has been disrupted. In addition to identifying team members, HFD is also giving consideration to health and safety and training requirements, as well as examining means to improve the logistical elements which would facilitate rapid deployment, such as aircraft charters. HFD is also creating a Skills Inventory database for all the employees in the department to make it very easy to select employees for crisis teams based on specific language skills, occupational experience, and knowledge that may be required. While it will take several months to implement the full system, an interim list of experienced staff with basic requirements will be in place by November 2005. HFD is currently preparing a memo that outlines the requirements for the team set-up for consideration and approval by the Deputy Minister.

Currently the Emergency Services Division (CNE) maintains a small roster of HQ employees that can be used to augment the officers in the Consular Operations Centre

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to assist in managing the increase in telephone enquiries during crises. A basic "marketing plan" to recruit additional HQ volunteers, a training plan and course outline has been developed however funding has not yet been secured. CNE hopes to start recruiting and training call centre volunteers in the 4th quarter of the 2005/06 fiscal year.

More work needs to be done to identify and train a larger group of officers that could supplement the dedicated teams working in the Operations Centre.

A number of additional initiatives outlined in the Consular Strategy for the Future and the Crisis Management Action plan are in the process of being developed or implemented. For example a Training Needs Analysis and descriptions of roles and responsibilities for the rapid deployment team members have been prepared. The implementation of some initiatives will be dependant on the approval and funding of a related human resources plan in the 2006/07 fiscal year.

Recommendation 4: Provide additional training related to crisis response including: crisis management training for HOMs; crisis response training for mission personnel and for headquarters personnel; media training; and consular services training.

Management Commitments/Actions:

Training is critical to ensuring that officers have the skills and capabilities to effectively respond to a crisis. A foundation level course is the "Responding to Natural Disasters" course regularly provided by the Canadian Foreign Service Institute (CFSI) in cooperation with CIDA and IRH/GHA. This course, developed with CIDA, is of particular interest to employees posted to countries that suffer from earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, famine, and volcanic eruptions, and to headquarters personnel who must manage the consular and partner department coordination of any Canadian response. Using case studies and lectures, the course covers the nature of disasters, needs of those affected, the roles of the various international and Canadian Government agencies, and response systems and procedures. Special sessions of this course were conducted for the Africa and Asia bureaus and the Latin America Heads of Mission prior to the 2005 hurricane season.

Media training is offered during the pre-posting season to all heads of mission and other officers who are likely to deal with the media at mission. FAC recognizes the need to ensure that a greater number of officers are exposed to this training.

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Consular services training is provided on a regular basis directly by the Consular Bureau.

A crisis management module is included in the regular training programme for Heads of Mission and is updated every year. This training needs to be expanded to a wider group of officers. Fact's Emergency Services Division (CNE) has prepared a Training Needs Analysis document to identify the training needs of the Rapid Deployment Team members, Heads of Mission and head-quarters volunteers.

The Emergency Services Division's (CNE) Human Resources Plan includes the creation of a Training Officer position to coordinate and manage the various consular and crisis response training programs. The work description is awaiting classification before it can be staffed. The plan also has identified the need to create a Senior Emergency Planning Officer position. Some of the duties of the position would include assisting missions in preparing and conducting crisis management exercises. CNE also continues to participate in Consular Warden Conferences (a warden is a volunteer acting as a key communication link between the mission and registered Canadians citizens abroad). Crisis scenarios are played out during these conferences, which not only test the consular response, but prompt missions to think more broadly about crisis management and business resumption plans. To promote such conferences, a special section has been added to the Consular Intranet site and brought to the attention of missions.

Recommendation 5: Ensure adequate emotional support for employees and family members during and after crises.

Management Commitments/Actions:

FAC appreciates the high levels of stress employees may face in the various situations they may face as part of their contributions to disaster response. The Department has already established a Counselling and Consultation Services Unit (HEC). The unit provides counselling and consultation services (including post-traumatic stress debriefing and counselling) to all Canada-based Staff, their dependants and locally engaged staff at Canada's missions abroad. The counsellors are accessible for emergencies at all times through the Operations Centre. HEC does currently have a policy in place to deploy counsellors to the missions abroad in anticipation of major events (e.g. to the Middle East missions in early 2003), as well as during and after natural disasters and other crises, in support of the CBS, their dependants and LES.

HEC is supplementing its crisis response capacity through the development of a roster of fully qualified Canadian counsellors who can be engaged via contract on short notice to provide counselling services from Canada or to be deployed to the affected missions.

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The cost of sending these counsellors to the missions can be covered under FSD 38 (preventive medical services). As well, where warranted, the removal of CBS and their dependants from a mission for further counselling or treatment can be funded under FSD 41 (health care travel). HEC is committed to work with the responsible offices in FAC to ensure that counselling and consultation services are included in Departmental contingency planning.

Local staff represent a significant portion of the Department's human resources and are essential to the operational delivery of Canada's programs abroad. The Locally Engaged Staff Services Bureau (HLD) is preparing guidelines to be included in Post emergency contingency plan to assist Missions in dealing promptly with LES in emergency/crisis situations. HLD is currently soliciting some of the missions recently affected by catastrophes or similar events to survey like-minded foreign missions on site on best practices in dealing with LES issues in such situations. The guidelines will be designed to accommodate the varying circumstances, for example, temporary suspension or reduction of mission operations, relocation of operations, closedown, evacuation etc. HLD is also consulting with other interested stakeholders, including partner departments, for their views on contingency measures, as well as possible funding issues where financial help for LES is being contemplated to defray personal losses in light of crises or disasters. HLD is reviewing existing internal flexibility and authorities for financial assistance for LES, their possible relocation to safe location in or out of the host country. These guidelines should be in place before the end of the 2005/06 fiscal year and the Department will prepare a TB submission if required for the necessary authorities.

Within the context of personal safety, all Missions are required to develop Personal Safety Contingency Plans and Local Standing Security Orders. These complement the Consular Contingency Plans, which also address emergency preparedness. As our staff are in more than 177 permanent locations around the globe, and travel regularly, it has been agreed that managers should be able to quickly contact and verify the welfare and whereabouts of all CBS when an emergency/crisis occurs. To facilitate this process, Missions are now being asked to maintain up to date contact lists for all CBS and dependants, including contact details for periods of personal and official travel. While many Missions, particularly those in high risk areas, currently employ this practice, it will be implemented on an across the board basis for all missions. HCM will send a Policy Notice message in November 2005 to all employees at mission advising them of the implementation of this policy. In addition, all employees, including those at headquarters, will be reminded regularly to update their personal contact information in the myInfo directory tool.

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Recommendation 6: Ensure the provision of fair and equitable rewards and recognition to affected staff following a crisis response.

Management Commitments/Actions:

The Department is a strong proponent for recognizing the significant contributions that our teams make in serving Canada and Canadians, many times under difficult circumstances and at personal risk. There are a number of existing FAC and GOC incentives already in place to reward and recognize team and individual work performance. However, these programs are not designed to compensate employees for the significant and prolonged disruption to their personal and professional lives that they may experience during the course of responding to a crisis. In order to address extraordinary situations, the Assignments and Executive Management Bureau (HFD) is developing a series of guidelines for the provision of rewards and incentives to employees affected by crisis situations. These incentives will include additional leave and other related benefits designed to allow employees to "decompress" following the crisis, thereby reducing the possibility of post-traumatic stress and other related issues. The guidelines will be completed by December 2005. As they may apply to employees of partner departments, the Common Services Abroad Division (SMC) will review the guidelines with partners. When the generic Common Service Abroad MOU opens for renegotiation in 2008, FAC is committed to incorporating these guidelines into that document.

Recommendation 7: Maintain a roster of Canadian crisis response expertise from outside FAC (as well as selected departmental personnel) prepared to take part in rapid deployment teams.

Management Commitments/Actions:

At the very beginning of a crisis, it is critical to select the team members that have the right skills and experience required for a particular event. Sometimes these specialist skills reside in other departments or outside of government. The rapid identification and deployment of additional staff during the tsunami proved invaluable for enhancing the Government of Canada's ability to respond to the variety of needs of Canadians in the affected countries and to liaise with those Governments, other donors and international organizations. We recognize that this was largely able to occur because of some key individuals occupying certain positions in Human Resources and that a more formal process is required. The development of a skills inventory would benefit the organization and improve our disaster response capabilities.

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FAC is already in the process of developing a list of pre-identified consular, political and communications experts that can be deployed at short notice to crisis situations to support and augment existing mission capacities or to establish a Government of Canada presence where they may not be one or where access or service has been disrupted. These lists have already proven very helpful for the rapid deployments that were initiated in response to Hurricane Katrina in the United States and in advance of Hurricane Rita. In addition to identifying which staff can be drawn upon for surge capacity, consideration is likewise being given to health and safety requirements and needed training. While it will take some time to put in place a robust system, it is hoped an interim list of experienced staff with basic requirements will be in place by November 2005. Work on a more formal database will occur in early 2006.

Compiling a comprehensive list of expertise that resides in other departments is already underway. This issue will also continue to be addressed in the preparation of MOUs with DND, RCMP and other government departments. Once these MOUs are in place the department will begin a more formal process for identifying expertise available in non-governmental organisations and the private sector. Future versions of the skills inventory database will help FAC to build a “Foreign Service Reserve” by expanding to include retired employees, employees in other government departments, provincial agencies, and NGOs.

Recommendation 8: Strengthen and integrate with the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force (START) the departmental crisis response unit (AGH) to ensure sufficient capacity during major, prolonged international crises.

Management Commitments/Actions:

As part of the reorganization of Foreign Affairs Canada in August 2005, the Department was committed to strengthen and consolidate crisis response and management capacities. A stand alone Humanitarian and Disaster Response Group (IRH/GHA) was created (taken from what used to be the Human Rights, Humanitarian Affairs and International Women’s Equality Division (AGH)). This unit has become part of the new Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force Secretariat Bureau (IRD), with a shared reporting relationship to the Human Security and Human Rights Bureau (GHD). The START was created following the International Policy Statement, and its emphasis on improving the Government of Canada’s response to countries in crisis and failed and fragile states.

The Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Response Group is mandated to lead the development, implementation and coordination of Canadian policy on international

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humanitarian affairs, and the development, with relevant government departments, of Canada's responses to humanitarian crises, in both conflict and natural disaster contexts. The Group is also responsible for leading the START Bureau's coordination of "whole of government" responses to major natural disasters abroad, in keeping with the SOPs, and ensuring follow-up to lessons identified from the tsunami and other disaster contexts. The group is being increased from three staff to nine, including two officers dedicated to natural disaster policy and coordination. The colocation within START should also allow the unit to draw on other parts of the START Secretariat in the event of a major crisis. The team will collaborate across FAC and with CIDA, DND, PSEPC, PHAC, PCO and other relevant partner government departments as well as with provinces/territories and municipalities as appropriate, and relevant international organizations, NGOs and academic institutions. The new team has already been successful in coordinating Canada's responses to the hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico and the Pakistan earthquake in the autumn of 2005.

Recommendation 9: Strengthen core capacity of the Emergency Services Division of Consular Affairs to ensure sufficient capacity during major, prolonged international crises.

Management Commitments/Actions:

The Consular Services Bureau (CND) has undertaken a review of its human resource requirements and these were presented to the Department's Executive Committee in early 2005. The Emergency Services Division's (CNE) Human Resources Plan includes a basic "marketing plan" to recruit additional HQ volunteers. CNE is planning on recruiting and training additional call centre volunteers as well as Family Liaison Officers in the 4th quarter of the 05/06 fiscal year.

Recommendation 10: Enhance the physical facilities and computer systems of the Consular Operations Centre.

Management Commitments/Actions:

Foreign Affairs Canada already has a modern Consular Operations Centre. The room next to the Centre (A2-217) has been configured to act as a second operations centre during emergencies. Telephone and network cabling have been installed to allow access for an additional 15-20 workstations. Twenty laptops have been purchased for use in this room and they are available to CNE for emergency response.

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CRISES, a new Crisis Management Module of COSMOS (the Consular Affairs Bureau Case Management Program) has been developed and its implementation should be completed before winter 2005.

Recommendation 11: Enhance the crisis management features of the facilities and systems at headquarters and at embassies.

Management Commitments/Actions:

In addition to expanding the Operations Centre, further upgrades are underway to allow more flexibility to respond to a larger crisis or simultaneous crises. The A2-500 room close to the Operation Centre has been identified and in the late fall it will be configured to be used by the Family Liaison Unit. The Headquarters Administration Bureau (SPD) is also working to enhance the configuration and communications infrastructure of other 500 Series boardrooms to create additional ad hoc crisis centres. SPD will be looking at longer term physical infrastructure needs in relation to the Long Term Accommodation Strategy (LTAS) which will see significant upgrades to facilities at the Lester B. Pearson Building. Work on overnight accommodation and meal preparation remains to be done.

Headquarters is also the central office of the organization, and as such needs a robust business continuity plan. This issue was discussed at the September 29th meeting of FAC's Departmental Security Committee. A sub-group of the Committee has been formed to identify actions required to update the plan.

We recognize that Missions, particularly those in high-risk areas, must be adequately prepared and equipped to handle crises. All Missions are required to update their Consular Contingency Plans, Personal Safety Contingency Plans, and Local Standing Security Orders annually. In many locations missions are reviewing these plans on a more frequent basis to reflect their local environment. Through mission inspections, and requests for copies, Security Operations and Personal Safety Division (ISR) undertakes a systematic review of these documents providing feedback to missions and advice in those areas where the mission may not have the experience needed to address issues. ISR also has a backup system through the Military Security Guard (MSG) program. Within the last few months the program has been able to bolster the human resources available for this function, both in the field and at headquarters. In the course of the next four years plans are in place to further enhance these resources. In addition, ISR works with missions to create contingency plans to identify alternate locations from which operations can be undertaken in the event that Chanceries and/or Official Residences are not accessible. Alternate locations include other friendly missions, "commercial" locations such as hotels, or a neighbouring Canadian Mission. Management is committed to addressing mission contingency plan in 2005/06. The Corporate Security

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Division (ISC) has already convened a working group to develop a model business resumption plan for missions. The geographics will work more closely with the Emergency Services Division and the Security Operations and Personal Safety Division (ISR) to ensure all mission contingency plans are updated and to develop a needs analysis framework.

Policies and planning are important, but so are infrastructure, equipment and tools. Currently Canada has 177 international offices (Embassies, High Commissions, Consulates-General, etc). It will take a number of years to ensure that all missions are adequately upgraded and equipped. Some funding for upgrading crisis management capacities at missions has already been received from the Treasury Board and a number of projects are underway. Further work is being undertaken to review ongoing issues at Missions, and to develop a revised security and crisis response framework in order to make appropriate recommendations on security upgrades for all missions. These recommendations will form part of a Memorandum to Cabinet in early fiscal year 2006/7. The Overseas Physical Resources Bureau (SRD) will also work with the geographics and Security Bureau (ISD) to factor these recommendations into their property project plans.

Recommendation 12: Ensure the availability of adequate crisis response equipment including temporary duty / rapid deployment team kits, and equipment for satellite offices.

Management Commitments/Actions:

The Department wants to ensure that our Rapid Deployment Teams have sufficient modern and portable equipment to enable them to operate independent of a Canadian Mission at any location on the globe. The Chief Information Officer (SXD) has formed a committee to examine capabilities for emergency communications. A Concept of Operations and an inventory of existing and proposed materials and services are being developed. In addition, some new computing and PSATCOM equipment has already been purchased. Testing is underway to provide remote access to COSMOS (the consular case management application) via PSATCOM links. The creation of temporary SIGNET accounts for temporary duty officers transferred from other locations is being explored.

The Emergency Services Division (CNE) has prepared a list of the non-technical items (Office supplies, flags, bedding, water purifiers, tents, etc) to be included in the rapid response kits. Further work is required on attempting to preposition the equipment in strategic locations. Teams will begin training with the equipment as soon as they are formed.

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Recommendation 13: Ensure the availability of sufficient emergency stockpiles ready for deployment, both in Canada and abroad.

Management Commitments/Actions:

CIDA, not Foreign Affairs, is responsible for the policies around the international deployment of Canada's emergency stockpiles. In August 2005, CIDA and FAC officials held a special meeting with Canadian Red Cross delegates responsible for maintaining the Government of Canada's relief supplies in Belleville, and representatives from the DND Joint Air Staff in Trenton (responsible for facilitating the deployment of the stocks when CF airlift is being utilized) to exchange views, clarify approaches and share information.

Recommendation 14: Strengthen media and public relations to ensure the proactive provision of coordinated government information on, and explanations of, Canada's response.

Management Commitments/Actions:

The Department recognizes the need to strengthen public affairs functions and we are looking to CIDA and DND as models. The technical briefings provided during the response to the tsunami were a positive step forward and have become a standard practice in our crisis response protocol.

During a crisis the Foreign Policy and Corporate Communications Division (BCF) liaises with communications counterparts in the Privy Council Office (PCO) and partner departments to share media lines and key messages, to draft and issue GoC news releases as required, and to coordinate the type of communications to be employed. BCF also shares key messages with HOMs.

The Media Relations Office (BCM) is seeking generic pre-approval for Heads of Missions to speak to the media when there is an event unfolding directly in their territory (e.g. Haiti). It will be left to HOMs to decide whether they want to designate a secondary spokesperson i.e. head of CIDA as was done in Sri Lanka after the tsunami. BCM is driven by the unfolding events and what seems most appropriate to tailor our response to each event.

More effort needs to be placed on ensuring a greater number of officers receive media relations training. This should not just be limited to those going on pre-posting training

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and should be included in core training for new officers, as well as a core module for middle managers at headquarters and program managers abroad.

The Department is also exploring the inclusion of a public affairs unit within the rapid Deployment Teams. Primarily, this module would allow the media relations units at headquarters to receive better information and support from the field. This unit could also augment the capacity of the Mission and the HOM to respond to media requests.

The issue of publishing to the Internet during a crisis is also being addressed. Content Publishers and technicians are not usually on-call; however the need to update information available to the public is sometimes urgent. The planned introduction of a Web Content Management System (i.e. Interwoven) will allow the Communications Bureau (BCD) which is responsible for the departmental internet site, the ability to update content without the need to use technicians from the Information Management and Technology Bureau (SXD) in emergency situations.

Recommendation 15: Exchange best practices with like-minded countries.

Management Commitments/Actions:

Canada has taken the lead in sharing best-practices with peer foreign ministries and international organizations. The Deputy Minister and the Associate Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs have consulted and exchanged practices with a number of other foreign ministries over the last 9 months. Canada has also hosted sessions on the tsunami response at a Wilton Park conference (April 2005) and a like-minded Foreign Ministry conference in Ottawa (October 2005).

The Consular Bureau (CND) regularly participates in the “5 Country Colloq.” that includes the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and the United States. The Emergency Services Division (CNE) has consulted extensively with the FCO to learn from their experiences in creating Rapid Deployment Teams. A visit by the US State Department Crisis Management group occurred in October 2005, and a visit to the German Foreign Ministry is planned for the winter of 2005. The Department’s Humanitarian and Disaster Response Group (IRH/GHA) has exchanged views with several key like-minded counterparts, including the UK, Australia, Norway, Sweden, and the United States. The unit also liaises regularly with international relief organizations, and is contributing to the Government of Canada’s participation (through CIDA) in the International Tsunami Evaluation Committee (TEC). The Department’s organizational change advisors, auditors and evaluators also regularly interact with their peers and report on how other organizations and agencies respond to emergencies. These recommendations are regularly shared with various internal stakeholders. Missions are

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also encouraged to report on how other foreign ministries, local organizations and agencies of the host country are structured to respond to a disaster. These bilateral and multilateral relationships will continue as we work with our partner countries to create common ways of responding to disasters and supporting each others efforts.

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