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MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY AND ASSOCIATE DEPUTY MINISTERS

The Speech from the Throne in October 1999 set an agenda for the Government of Canada based on improving quality of life for all Canadians. Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) is being called on to play important roles throughout that agenda. This is consistent with the direction of the HRDC Vision, which captures the strategic role we can and do play in this country and the life of its citizens.

HRDC keeps looking ahead to identify priorities for action that will enable us to contribute to government-wide objectives. We are listening to our clients, our partners and our staff. This Action Agenda outlines the highlights of initiatives that we expect to implement during 2000 and 2001. It notes the major issues that should lead to other initiatives in the years after that. Many involve all parts of HRDC, others are specific to the core services that Canadians know well.

As we continue to realign our role more consistently with the Vision, we will build on our traditions of leadership, innovation, partnerships and flexibility to work with Canadians and communities of all kinds to help them succeed and prosper in every way.

We believe this Action Agenda will help you to see the positive and challenging directions that we have before us. It will show you the vital role that we will continue to play in building a stronger Canada and stronger communities – a role that has room for contributions from all HRDC employees.



Claire M. Morris,
Deputy Minister



Jim Lahey,
Associate Deputy Minister

FOREWORD

The Action Agenda, previously referred to as the Business Plan, summarizes HRDC's major expected priorities for the next few years. Many of those priorities are closely linked to the government's overall agenda, as set out in the 1999 Speech from the Throne. Others reflect the important ongoing work of all regions and branches, as well as continued action on previous commitments. Because HRDC responds to the needs of Canada and its citizens, these priorities may change if new situations emerge to which HRDC can help contribute results.

Staff within HRDC, and partners outside the department, use the Action Agenda to gain an up-to-date sense of corporate priorities. Many groups within HRDC also use it to help develop their own, more detailed agendas. We encourage those who are interested in more information on current and projected actions to read the department's annual Report on Plans and Priorities. It is available on the Internet at <http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/dept/fas-sfa/rpp9900.shtml>.

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To enable Canadians to participate fully in the workplace and the community.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The October 1999 Speech from the Throne, the departmental Vision and the many programs and services that HRDC has created over time are strategic contributions to human development.

Some of these contributions centre on programs that provide income to individuals and families; others involve services that help people make informed choices and prepare for their future; still others reach people in the workplace, the learning system, the home and community.

Our Mission:

To enable Canadians to participate fully in the workplace and the community.

Our Vision is to:

- take an integrated approach to human development
- enable Canadians to manage transitions in their lives
- provide the highest quality service
- emphasize preventative measures
- act as a leader in policies and programs
- forge partnerships
- build the capacity of communities
- respect our core values
- continue to develop and build on the strengths of our people.



In very tangible ways, we are the face of the Government of Canada for many Canadians. Our initiatives reach many groups of Canadians with distinct needs and of all ages – as the examples in the following chart show.

Children	Youth	Working Age Adults	Seniors
EI family income supplement	Youth Employment Strategy	Employment Insurance Income benefits	Canada Pension Plan Retirement benefits
First Nations and Inuit childcare	EI Premium Relief for employers hiring youth	Employment Benefits and Support Measures	Old Age Security benefits
Canada Education Savings Grant	Literacy initiatives for out-of-school youth	Promotion of stable, safe, fair, family-friendly and equitable workplaces	Spouse's Allowance benefits
CPP benefits to dependent children of disabled or deceased contributors	Canada Student Loans	CPP Disability benefits	Guaranteed Income Supplement benefits
National Child Benefit	Canada Study Grants	Employment Assistance for Persons with Disabilities	
International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention on Child Labour.	Student debt management initiatives	Opportunities Fund	
National Longitudinal Survey on Children and Youth	Student Summer Job Action	CPP Survivors benefits	
	Social Insurance Numbers	Canada Jobs Fund	
	Youth Occupational Safety and Health	Urban Aboriginal Initiatives	
		Older Workers Pilot Projects Initiatives	
		Labour Market Information	

MAJOR HRDC-WIDE PRIORITIES

In 2000 and beyond, there are seven major examples of this kind of integrated work that will reach across HRDC.

INTEGRATED APPROACHES

The Government of Canada and HRDC are taking more integrated approaches to the public policy issues facing Canada. Some of these approaches are rooted in the growing collaboration with provincial and territorial governments through the Social Union Framework Agreement (SUFA) and other initiatives. Many of our priorities involve action in all regions and branches of our department. They require collaboration with other departments, other governments and partners throughout society. Some priorities reflect our determination to improve how we serve Canadians and how we operate as a department.

In 2000 and beyond, there are seven major examples of this kind of integrated work that will reach across HRDC.

Meeting the needs of Canada's children and youth

The October 1999 Speech from the Throne underlines the priority that Canadians attach to meeting the needs of children and youth. Canadians know that action today will help our country be strong and productive well

into the future. We have done a lot on children's and youth issues already and we are ready to do even more.

Many of the youngest Canadians will benefit as parents have access to expanded Employment Insurance Maternity and Parental Benefits. Moving ahead on the National Children's Agenda will involve work and flexible partnerships with the provinces and territories to ensure that supports to children and families are in place across Canada. It will build on our success with the National Child Benefit and it will draw on our strengths in policy development, the creation of accountability frameworks and evaluation. Beyond that, our work to help employers, workers and unions address workplace issues will include awareness and promotion of family-friendly policies and practices.

HRDC already has many initiatives that address the needs of young people through the Youth Employment Strategy, the Canadian Opportunities Strategy and other measures. We expect to add to them through new activities such as an October 2000 conference on occupational safety and health that will

emphasize youth. The conference is a partnership that includes the Labour Program and the Human Resources Investment Branch. It has the support of the Canadian Association of Administrators of Labour Legislation, a federal-provincial-territorial body. The work of the Income Security Program branch to bring information on financial planning for retirement to young people is designed to meet their long-term interests.

Meeting the Needs of Canadians with Disabilities

The government released "Future Directions To Address Disability Issues For The Government Of Canada: Working Together For Full Citizenship" in July 1999. It points to the agenda the government will pursue in partnership with other federal departments and agencies, other governments, the disability community, the voluntary sector, and private sector interests, including labour and employer organizations. Together we will share responsibility for working with Canadians with disabilities so that they can achieve full access and inclusion throughout Canadian life.

Consistent with the Throne Speech commitment, HRDC will expand on a legacy of programs and services. People who apply for CPP Disability program benefits can expect to see enhanced service. The Labour Program will emphasize measures that improve workplace equity, health and safety in the workplace and accommodation under the Employment Equity Act.



We expect to see more citizen-centred attention to managing the links between HRDC programs like EI Sickness Benefits and CPP-Disability, and links to the programs of external partners, such as Workers Compensation Boards. We will do more to assist people receiving benefits to return to work.

Skills for the 21st Century

The October 1999 Speech from the Throne underlined the importance of a skilled workforce for a successful 21st century economy. Increasing the skill level of Canada's labour force will contribute to a stronger economy, higher productivity, a better standard of living and a more inclusive, less polarized society. Skills also confer important benefits to individuals, including higher incomes, better labour market performance, and greater resilience and adaptability.

HRDC will be leading the Canadian government's priorities on skills and learning by:

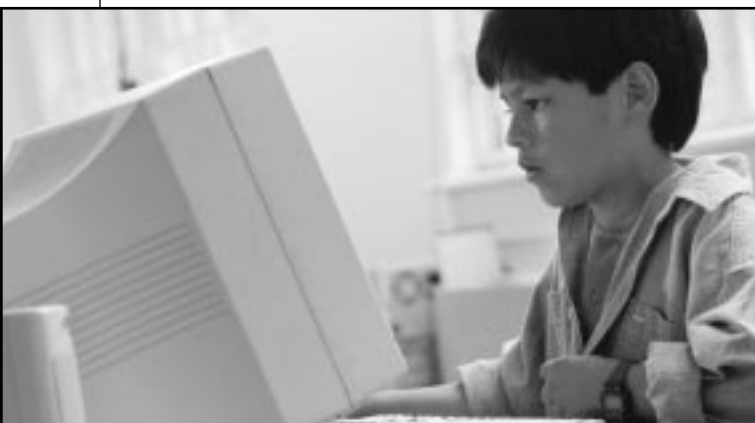
- supporting the work of Sector Councils towards better matching the skills and the needs of industry and the economy
- making it easier for Canadians to access lifelong learning
- working with partners to provide a single window for Canadian labour market information
- ensuring that skills and experience, both Canadian and foreign, are properly recognized, and
- assisting those facing additional challenges who risk being left behind.

HRDC will work with provinces and other stakeholders in developing a National Action Plan on Skills and Learning aimed at ensuring that all Canadians have the skills necessary to succeed in a global economy which is increasingly competitive, technology and knowledge-intensive, and dependent on skilled human resources.

Implementing a New Service Delivery Policy

We will respond to our clients' expectations for faster service, more information and greater access to electronic services. Our commitment is to achieve "citizen-centred service" based on the diverse needs of all Canadians – whether a traditional program client, someone who wants information or a taxpayer. We will use new service delivery technologies to help Canada achieve its goal of the government most connected to its citizens in the world.

Our service delivery innovations will include involvement in the Service Canada initiative that is testing ways to create one-stop access to Government of Canada programs and services. Some Human Resource Centres of Canada are pilot sites, and access to our information and services will be available at all Service Canada sites. The lessons of the pilots could affect how our local services operate.



A new Service Delivery Policy will also help guide our future directions. The new policy is based on offering many channels for our services in a world in which more Canadians use the Internet and automated services, such as kiosks and telephone systems, to carry out basic program transactions and get information. This reflects the Throne Speech commitment to enable Canadians to deal with their government on-line. It will position us for a world in which HRDC employees devote more of their time to our Vision priorities such as community capacity-building, prevention, and strengthening and expanding partnerships with other governments and communities of Canadians. Furthermore, our assisted or advisory services, both transactional and transformational, will provide more complex information and advice ensuring an entire continuum of services.

Supporting People Priorities

While a number of public service-wide issues continue to affect HRDC employees, it is clear that there are other important issues that we need to address within HRDC itself over the next few years. As the new Service Delivery Policy makes its impact felt, increased automation will enable many of our service delivery staff to move out of basic work on individual program transactions. People will move from working with paper to working with citizens and communities. Some of them may need to build more advanced interpersonal and problem-solving skills. We also need to



develop our leadership capacity, build a more inclusive workforce and enhance our work environment. We have already started to address these by implementing our Supporting People Action Plan and the Recruitment and Retention Strategy.

By 2005, about 19% of our current employees will be eligible to retire. To create a climate that encourages skilled young people to join HRDC and reinvigorates the working lives and development of our current employees will take innovation in workplace practices and human resource approaches. The 1999 Public Service Employee Survey and other feedback mechanisms are making clear what we have to do to build a working climate that will enable all the employees of HRDC to achieve our shared goals.

Our responses will include specific measures required to address issues of worker well-being. We intend to improve communications within the workplace. We will emphasize training, so our staff can build satisfying careers, while meeting the challenges of their current jobs.

We will continue to strengthen the leadership development support necessary to meet changing workplace requirements.

Information Technology – After the Year 2000 Challenge

While the department remains vigilant in order to implement Year 2000 contingency plans immediately should they be required, attention has turned to establishing and funding Information Technology (IT) priorities in a post Year 2000 environment.

HRDC now faces a stored up demand for vital systems work that had to be deferred while we carried out our essential Year 2000 work. We also expect new legislation to be announced, such as EI maternal and parental benefit changes, that must be implemented with Systems support. At the same time, HRDC is mobilizing to implement the Government On-Line targets announced in the Speech from the Throne to make

Canada known as the government most connected to its citizens by 2004. This electronic commerce work will also support our IT activities to implement the new HRDC Service Delivery Policy of "citizen-centred service".

We have very limited money, people and time to address our systems priorities so we have to be strategic in our choices and approaches. Therefore, Systems is developing a strategic IT vision to establish and support departmental service line priorities. Our service needs will drive the IT vision and this will require regular reviews that align our Systems resources to their best possible uses. As the department moves to upgrade and replace its systems infrastructure, the acceptance of department-wide standards will also be required. This will mean clear rules about what applications can and cannot be used in HRDC in order to reduce demands on our networks and the staff who support them. In light of the prominence of systems requirements to support existing HRDC program delivery including the need to renovate legacy systems while also undertaking new IT projects, the department is currently working with Treasury Board Secretariat to secure the necessary ongoing resource levels to support HRDC systems priorities as well as the Government On-Line initiative.



Strengthening Program Management Capacity

The scope and nature of HRDC programs are wide and diverse and serve the many different needs of Canadians across the country. The environment in which these programs are delivered is dynamic. Constant change over a period in which significant resource reductions have occurred has compounded the complexity of program management and delivery. Nonetheless, HRDC staff have shown a willingness and ability to adapt to these new and evolving operating challenges. In order to strengthen staff knowledge and tools, a number of inter-related initiatives are being undertaken.

The Corporate Management System is being implemented to fully integrate departmental financial, procurement and human resource systems into a single system that will allow HRDC to meet government requirements and improve the quality and accuracy of decision support information and analysis.

A series of guidelines which reflect HRDC's values and which support modern management practices will be issued to support managers facing the challenge of delivering programs that provide grants and contributions. These guidelines will focus on assisting employees to make consistent and effective decisions and improve overall financial management and program effectiveness.



Legal Services are providing legal support to the grants and contributions initiative, by reviewing standard agreements and guidelines, providing legal awareness training and responding to specific legal questions.

Training to reinforce these guidelines and the adoption of modern management practices in general will be developed and delivered. Sessions to create awareness of risk management tools and processes will be conducted.

Action plans will be developed and implemented to address specific priority areas for improvement identified in the assessment of our departmental capacity with respect to modern management practices. Legal Services are also available to advise and assist regional and headquarters staff in connection with any other work-related legal questions.

OUR CORE ACTIVITIES

Most Canadians know HRDC for our high-profile core activities. These are the HRDC programs, services, policies and partnerships that reach more than 9 million Canadians each year and in each of these areas, we have a record of innovation to build on in 2000 and beyond.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE INCOME BENEFITS

When Canadians are unemployed, they can seek temporary income support from Employment Insurance (EI) while they look for work. EI is one of Canada's most high profile social programs. In 1999, 4 of every 5 unemployed Canadians, who lost or quit a job, could count on Employment Insurance income benefits. As well, Employment Benefits and Support Measures, which provide measures to help the unemployed return to work, are delivered by Human Resources Investment and the provinces and territories where agreements are in place.

In 1999, HRDC provided EI income benefits to about 2.3 million Canadians. We will make more than 22 million payments to those clients and they will make about 44 million enquiries about claims and program information, mostly through our automated systems. About 8,000 HRDC employees deliver and support the Employment Insurance Income Benefits Program.

For 2000 and beyond, our commitment is to improve how Employment Insurance works for clients. That will involve increased service standards and a more balanced service to meet the needs of all Canadians. We intend to keep monitoring the reforms that led to the EI system.

We will keep testing responses to issues that arise. Consistent with the HRDC Vision, we will continue to act on our commitment to the highest quality service in all areas of EI activities and policy leadership.

Short and Medium-Term Initiatives

We will support the government as it moves forward on its Throne Speech commitment to enable eligible Canadians to receive up to a year of Maternity and Parental Benefits. This will involve work to assist in the legislative process, and then ensure that our staff have the tools to implement the changes that Parliament approves. We will make sure that Canadians know about the new rules.

Our clients deserve the fastest service that we can provide and accordingly we now very often meet or exceed our service standards in the area of claims processing. We strive to increase the response time for clients to get through to employees in our Employment Insurance telecentres. By using modern communications technology, including the Internet, we are improving access to our

programs and services for Canadians in every part of the country.

But reaching service goals is not just about speed. We intend to test a new balanced approach that will also consider the quality of our work and our costs of providing service. It is part of a more integrated strategy that will help us make the soundest choices on how to target resources and management attention. It will help us improve our overall management of workload and performance.

In relation to Investigation and Control activities, the challenge is always to get the balance right between protecting the integrity of the EI program fairly and respecting the needs of clients. To achieve this balance we expect to find new ways to deal with cases in which clients do not declare their earnings while getting benefits. Increased use of group information sessions will make sure that people are aware of their responsibilities and rights.

The integrity of the Social Insurance Number (SIN) system is a major priority. We have already taken action to improve the quality of the data on the Social Insurance Register. Our next steps will improve procedures and rules to reduce the chance of fraud related to SINs. We expect to work in partnership with provincial governments to improve the information that we need for a strong Social Insurance Number system.



Longer-Term Plans

The government made some fundamental changes to income support for unemployed Canadians when it introduced Employment Insurance reform. It recognized that those changes required thorough review through an ongoing EI monitoring and assessment process. That review will continue. The Minister, the Employment Insurance Commission and the government may ask us to study issues or test better ways of reaching the goals of EI. This work will draw on the input of employees in the regions and the policy contributions of other branches at HRDC.

Employees, clients, partners and the courts have all said that the Employment Insurance Act can be difficult to understand and to apply in practice. Consequently, work with the Department of Justice will continue towards a plain language version of the Employment Insurance Act. The result should be a document that makes the decision-making process simpler for us – and makes it easier to explain to clients, their representatives, Boards of Referees, the courts and others.

OUR CORE ACTIVITIES

HUMAN RESOURCES INVESTMENT

The Government of Canada has identified a strong role for strategic human resources investments in enabling all Canadians to participate fully in our society and economy. These investments reach people of all ages, groups and communities.

Human Resources Investment (HRI) activities assist more than 3 million Canadians directly each year in all age groups and communities across Canada. Canadians also access our information through web sites, kiosks and publications. More than 4,200 HRDC employees help to deliver our programs and services. Many others work for partner governments and organizations that design and deliver related programs and services through agreements with us.

For 2000 and beyond, we will expand on the work we are doing in four areas of strategic priority:

- enhancing social inclusion to enable full workplace and community participation by all
- promoting learning and skills development

- supporting people through life transitions by promoting attachment to and reintegration into the labour market, and
- in increasing private and voluntary sector capacity to promote human development.

Short and Medium-Term Initiatives

The work we do in enhancing social inclusion is supported by a number of activities and initiatives that provide children, youth at risk, aboriginal people, persons with disabilities, with the tools to participate more fully in society and the workplace.

Key programs and services include: youth employment initiatives; development of the Aboriginal Human Resources Strategy; management and implementation of the Federal Agenda on Disability, and the delivery of such programs as Employability Assistance for Persons with Disabilities; and the development and implementation of strategies for the voluntary sector and homelessness.

In the area of promoting learning and skills development, HRI is working towards a national strategy for lifelong learning and initiatives to make it easier for Canadians to have their previous learning recognized across the country. We are also working on making it easier for Canadians to finance access to learning through the Canada Students Loan and Canada Education and Savings Grant programs.

Supporting people through their many transitions in life by promoting attachment to the labour market is another priority. We are working on providing Canadians with reliable, consistent, and usable information on labour market, learning and social development issues. We plan to build on this excellent base of information and work with other federal partners to develop a single window to Canada-wide information about labour markets, skills requirements and training opportunities – on the internet, over the telephone or in person in communities across the country. In addition to our work on developing better information products and multi-channel delivery systems, we will continue to promote attachment to the labour market through such programs and initiatives as: Job Creation Partnerships, Employment Benefit and Support Measures, Local Labour Market Partnerships, and Skills Development.

We are also working to increase the capacity of Canada's private and voluntary sectors to promote human development. For example, we are working to bring to life the recent



Speech from the Throne commitment to have sector councils bring together representatives from business, labour, education and other professional groups to address human resource and skills issues of importance to the economy.

Our short and medium term work depends on our ability to deliver programs and services in an effective and efficient manner, and through a dedicated workforce that is committed to serving Canadians. That is why the Human Resources Investment Branch will develop an action plan for improving the integrity of its programs and services based on our systems, implementing risk strategies, developing shared accountability frameworks, and by providing employees with appropriate tools and training. We will also support our staff by focussing on recruitment and retention and on developing a continuously learning and skilled workforce, and on developing the HRI as a workplace of choice.

Long-Term Plans

Realizing the Vision will involve long-term action in all of our strategic and management priorities, such as building the capacity of the private and voluntary sectors to promote human development. We intend to develop and implement a Community Capacity Building Strategy and will create a framework to guide HRDC's relationship with the voluntary sector.

We will also strengthen our support for partnerships and horizontal management of policy development and program and service delivery.

Through this work, we can expand the role we have taken on as a catalyst and resource for strong human development partnerships. It will be consistent with our determination to define the outcomes that we expect from our programming, based on their real impact on communities --- and Canada as a whole. One step in that direction will be to establish more and better indicators that will enable us to assess our intended objectives against achieved results, and plot a course for continual improvement to the administration and delivery of HRI programs, services, information.

OUR CORE ACTIVITIES

INCOME SECURITY PROGRAMS

The Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and Old Age Security (OAS) programs are a Canadian success story. Thanks to them, the percentage of older Canadians with low incomes has dropped substantially. The CPP Disability program is Canada's largest disability insurance program.

These programs provide benefits to more than 4.7 million people in Canada and another 130,000 people who live in other countries. More than 3,000 HRDC employees deliver and support these Income Security Programs (ISP), increasingly in partnership with other governments, insurers and community-based organizations.

For 2000 and beyond, our commitment is to continue to strengthen these programs and improve services by drawing on the Vision to help us choose our priorities. That will include delivering services better and in new ways and policy changes that will reflect a rapidly changing society, beyond those described in our HRDC-wide priorities.

Short and Medium-Term Initiatives

Historically, Canadians lived for ten or fifteen years after retirement. Now, with early retire-

ments and longer lifespans, people may need income to last them 30 years or more. Too few Canadians are planning and saving for those longer retirements. At the same time, public confidence in the public pension system is lower than it should be.

With that in mind, the Information on Retirement Income System (IRIS) initiative is a growing ISP priority. IRIS has three important messages for Canadians about their retirement needs. First, it will inform Canadians that their public pension system is on solid financial ground and that it will be there for them when they retire. Second, it will convey the message that public pensions are a solid base, but not a replacement for financial planning (e.g. RRSPs). Third, it will help Canadians understand the value of planning for their own retirement-income needs. We've started this campaign with tools such as CPP contribution statements and local outreach partnerships; we will add to it in 2000 through additional partnerships and media messaging.

We have begun a five-year Information-Technology (IT) Renewal plan to bring the technology that supports our programs up to date. Some of our supporting technology is more than twenty years old. Our IT Renewal



plan will modernize the current benefit delivery system and provide sustainable systems support to our programs. It will provide us with flexible technology that will be more reliable and more responsive, and allow us to adapt to legislative changes or expand services much more easily.

Recently, we have made many improvements to our own processes to improve the speed of service. One outstanding priority is to improve the speed of our disability appeals. Already we have made some real progress: we have doubled the number of our adjudicators in the past three years, and our processing times at the reconsideration stage now often beat the program targets. The Pension Appeals Board has tripled the number of its judges, and judges periodically "blitz" backlogs of Leave to Appeal requests.

While we have sped up the process, we now want to look at a more simplified system and the use of a more informal alternate dispute resolution process. At existing and new pilot sites, we will adopt case-management principles and increase contact with our clients, helping them develop their applications, obtain the

relevant information, and make informed decisions, from before the application stage to after the reconsideration stage. We will discuss the reasons for adjudication decisions personally with clients and help them understand the reasons for the decision. We believe this will result in a shorter, faster, and fairer process and will provide better client service. In addition, we will strive to use the clearest language possible in all our written communications.

Longer-Term Plans

The major CPP and OAS policy decisions of the past few years have ensured the long-term stability of our public pension system. Still, the importance of these programs to Canadians means that we will keep reviewing our policies and processes.

One of the most important long-term initiatives will be to renew our service capacity. We want to create an integrated system built around individual clients that will generate the information we need to manage people's cases and the entire system better. This process will start in 2000 and should take place in stages until 2005. It will include electronic commerce applications, with access through the Internet.

We will seek out more partnerships with other public and private income support programs, and strengthen the ones that we have already. That will enable us to ensure better-coordinated income support for people who are eligible for it. It will also enable us to ensure that people who can work have the supports they need to help them reach their goals.

OUR CORE ACTIVITIES

LABOUR

The Government of Canada will celebrate a century of Labour programs and services in Canada during 2000. These programs and services promote and foster labour-management cooperation and workplaces that are stable, equitable, safe and fair.

More than one million Canadians work at 40,000 worksites regulated by federal labour laws. Almost 700 HRDC employees deliver or support the activities of the Labour Program. The Labour Program also gets results by supporting partnerships and working closely with provincial/territorial labour departments and key stakeholders in the development of new measures and policies.

For 2000 and beyond, we expect to see continued evolution of performance measures that test new ways of achieving results. There will be reviews of key legislation that could lead to change. Our policies will reflect the impact of increasing federal-provincial labour co-operation as well as international links, all related to the rapidly evolving workplace environment and our Vision.

Short and Medium-Term Initiatives

Most of the work in our Labour Program is linked to activities and responsibilities under the Canada Labour Code. Part I of the Code covers industrial relations and Parliament amended it, effective January 1, 1999. The amendments changed many aspects of how affected employers and unions pursue collective bargaining, so we will work with them ensure that they understand their new rights and responsibilities.

We are looking ahead to possible changes to Part II (Occupational Safety and Health) of the Code during 2000 or 2001. This would draw on past years of consultations to date. Changes would put more responsibility for the prevention and resolution of health and safety problems into the hands of those in the workplace – the employers and workers. Part II changes would also allow our Labour Affairs Officers to spend less time responding to formal complaints and more time on work that prevents problems in the first place.



As part of our work to simplify processes, we plan to build on the excellent results of some recent pilot initiatives by expanding their implementation across Canada. One example is the hiring and use of Early Response Officers to resolve wage-related complaints. Another is to train our Labour Affairs Officers in alternate dispute resolution which will help reduce the number of employers and employees who use formal redress mechanisms under Part III of the Code. We also want to put increased emphasis on preventive mediation in our industrial relations work.

Information on workplace issues, including federal, provincial and territorial labour laws and individual collective agreements are proving to be an important resource. Employers, unions, provincial and territorial labour departments and other partners in the industrial relations community, both in Canada and internationally use this information. To build on the interest in this information, we expect to bring the Canadian labour law reports available on the Labour Program web site up to date.

We will also include a more representative sample of collective agreements and include updated analysis of collective agreement provisions, including greater emphasis on innovative workplace practices.

International labour issues have a higher profile as concerns grow about the social impacts of globalization. To meet those concerns, we will work with other federal departments, the provinces and territories towards Canadian ratification of International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions on forced labour, occupational safety and health and worst forms of child labour. Through our work in the ILO and other such organizations, we will continue to promote respect of core labour standards internationally. We will support the government's work to strengthen relations in the Americas by working with the United States, Mexico and Chile on labour issues, as well as by helping to develop Canada's position on labour issues in trade negotiations.

Longer-Term Plans

Consultation and review of legislation is always important to ensure that the legal frameworks governing the federal labour jurisdiction reflect emerging realities and our changing economy. Part III (Labour Standards) of the Canada Labour Code will be the subject of further consultations that could lead to legislative change. A parliamentary review of the Employment Equity Act will take place in 2001. To prepare for that, a program evaluation of the Act will take place.

This will involve an assessment of progress achieved and the identification of any problem areas. The evaluation will include surveys of private and public sector employers who are subject to the Employment Equity Act, employers who are subject to the Federal Contractors Program, unions and other relevant groups as well as comparisons with employers who are not covered by the Act.

Other legislative changes may be triggered by the proposed future review of the pay equity provisions of the Canadian Human Rights Act. This could result in amendments to the equal pay provisions of the Canada Labour Code and a review of the Equal Pay Program. We may see legislation that could update the Government Employees Compensation Act related to injuries on the job.

DEFINING OUR IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

This is an agenda based on improving the quality of life for all Canadians in those areas where HRDC can make the most difference.

AGENDA FOR ACTION

The Throne Speech, HRDC's Vision and the other commitments of our branches, regions and local offices all combine to create an important and valuable agenda for action. This is an agenda based on improving the quality of life for all Canadians in those areas where HRDC can make the most difference.

Our challenge is to define the actual benefits that we want to achieve, as clearly and precisely as we can. We are working as a department and with partners in all sectors of Canadian life to establish citizen-centred outcomes for our work and partnerships.

That effort is consistent with federal government commitments under the Social Union Framework Agreement and other federal-provincial-territorial initiatives. It is an effort that will enable HRDC to ensure that we are reaching for the best possible priorities, and that we are attaining a positive impact in everything we do.

