



UKRAINE'S MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN OTTAWA

Meetings were held at CIDA and at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) from February 26 to 28, 1996 between the Agency for Coordination of International Technical Assistance of Ukraine (ACITA) and CIDA representatives, as well as representatives from Foreign Affairs. Ukraine's Minister for International Technical Assistance, Lada Pavlikovska, and Acting CIDA Vice-President for Central and Eastern Europe, George Saibel, also signed a Summary of Understanding between ACITA and CIDA.

The principal purpose of these meetings was to establish closer contacts between both Agencies, and to familiarize ACITA with the functions and mechanisms of implementing the Canadian technical cooperation program, including a review of the program's projects to date.

Discussions also centered on the program's partnership with both Canada's

and Ukraine's private sector, non-governmental organizations, professional associations, educational institutions and the representative levels of government.

The direct links established to date vis-à-vis Canadian experts and organizations and their Ukrainian counterparts were noted and praised and supported the premise that the program is truly multifaceted and cooperative in nature. These links should be coordinated by both agencies. Indeed, both parties duly recognized the success in the promotion and development of bilateral economic, political and cultural relations attributable to the program.

The Ukrainian participants expressed their gratitude and emphasized the clear importance of a number of measures being undertaken by the Government of Canada for the continuing development and strengthening of economic relations between the two countries.



Minister Lada Pavlikovska and Assistant Deputy Minister, Europe Branch, at Foreign Affairs, Jean-Pierre Juneau

CIDA Interview (Cont'd.)

- *In the recent Cabinet shuffle, one of the changes that is striking is that there is a new Minister (Hon. Pierre Pettigrew) responsible for CIDA. What do you foresee as the relationship between CIDA and Foreign Affairs, and specifically with the programs in your area?*

Mr. Pettigrew will be working closely with Mr. Axworthy (*newly-appointed Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy*). There is already a mechanism set up where the three Ministers, including our International Trade Minister Art Eggleton, will meet every week with the Deputy Ministers concerned to make sure we've got one foreign policy; that we are going in one direction; and that, what we do in technical assistance in trade, fits in with what we are trying to do in overall foreign policy. That's not going to change. What will change is that we will have a greater amount of Ministerial time (on CIDA programs) than is possible when you have a Minister who has to spend half of his/her time on one portfolio and half on the other.

- *When the announcement was made last year that the entire technical assistance program for Ukraine was moved from Foreign Affairs to CIDA, there was some questioning of the decision. CIDA had always been perceived as targeting developing*

countries, but Ukraine and most of Eastern Europe, while undergoing major changes, are not in this category, as you yourself have said. What was the thinking behind the switch?

The decision was taken far more for practical, administrative reasons than for anything else. In order to deliver a program of this kind, you need support mechanisms. You need a financial system that allows you to track payments, to make a large number of payments, to be able to pay contractors. You need a contracting process that allows you to do what you have to do and do it speedily. All of these mechanisms already exist in CIDA. They did not exist in Foreign Affairs. We have just gone through a process now of completing the transfer from the Foreign Affairs financial system to the CIDA financial system. This process itself is a horrendous one, and it's been an enormous amount of work for all the officers and the support staff involved. What they have now in CIDA is a system that allows them to track all their expenditures, and to manage and control project disbursements. The Foreign Affairs system is not set up to do this, because they never had the requirement. So it's much more the administrative controls that prompted the Minister to say: Look, this doesn't make any sense. Why should we

have to create a new infrastructure in External Affairs to do this job when that infrastructure already exists in CIDA. Let's move it across.

Now that we've got the new programs here, you find many people in CIDA who say that they have gained much from having the Central Eastern Europe branch come into CIDA. The other branches have been so fascinated by our capacity to respond quickly and by the flexible way we function, that they have come to us to ask us to help them change their way of operating to match our responsiveness. So I think we have done very well in this Agency. I think that we have learned a great deal, and have been able to give a lot in return. It's been mutually beneficial.

- *As a final note, have you been to Ukraine, and are you planning to visit soon?*

I haven't yet been to Ukraine yet, but I plan to be in Kyiv in March to visit with Ukrainian interlocutors and with our Ambassador Christopher Westdal. We've worked together many times in the past. I also have close contacts with Emil Baran (*in charge of the Technical Assistance Program in the Kyiv Embassy*), who worked with me on CIDA's Egypt program in the 1980s.

