

May 19, 1995

NOTES ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL MECHANISMS IN CANADA

- Cooperation between different jurisdictions is essential to the provision of "good government" in Canada. Many national objectives can only be achieved through the concerted efforts of all orders of government.
- Because of Canada's federal structure, public policy objectives are not the exclusive purview of either the federal or provincial governments. Hence, a constructive approach by both orders of government is necessary to ensure the efficient operation of the federation and to realize these desired policy objectives.
- Effective intergovernmental consultation and cooperation in Canada requires both formal and informal mechanisms, processes and practices. These include exchanges of correspondence; telephone conversations; conference calls; and bilateral, multilateral and regional meetings of federal and provincial ministers.
- Only a small percentage of these activities are formal in nature. On average, over the last five year period, over 90 meetings of senior officials and Ministers from the two orders of government took place each year (see Annexes 1 and 2).
- Typically, Canadian intergovernmental practices are described as "ad-hoc" when compared with similar practices in other federal states (e.g., Germany and Australia). Nevertheless, there are several key policy areas where fully developed and long established intergovernmental mechanisms have been developed (e.g., Finance, Agriculture, Employment, Justice, Transport and Health). The elements of the formal intergovernmental structures in the area of Finance are shown in Annex 3.
- Canadian intergovernmental structures have evolved and developed independently and without an articulated government-wide strategic plan.
- The Meech Lake Accord contained provisions for a more formal and coordinated system of intergovernmental mechanisms. Article 148 called for First Ministers' Conferences "*at least once each year to discuss the state of the Canadian economy and such other matters as may be appropriate*". Article 50 called for an annual constitutional conference (see Annex 4).

- These articles generated considerable controversy in the ensuing debate on the Meech Lake Accord, especially in the context of wide spread criticism of "executive federalism". Although not explicitly set out in the Accord, the assumption was that Ministerial activity in support of First Ministers' Meetings could be regularized and coordinated.
- It should be noted that Australia has recently developed a relatively more coordinated intergovernmental system with the creation of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in the mid-1980s. It is generally believed that this was inspired in part by similar initiatives in Canada at that time which culminated in the articles cited above in the Meech Lake Accord. With a requirement to meet on an annual basis, COAG is a vehicle for establishing coordinated processes and policies throughout the year among various Ministries in areas of mutual interest to the national and state governments. Since its inception, COAG has been credited with aiding the development of coordinated microeconomic policies and promoting reform of financial relations between states and the national government to increase funding stability.

Annex 1

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL MECHANISMS
IN CANADA: AN ILLUSTRATIVE LIST**

Formal Structures

- Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment
- Council of Canadian Energy Ministers/ Annual Mines Ministers Conference
- Canadian Council of Forestry Ministers
- Council of Ministers Responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety
- Committee of Ministers on Internal Trade

Informal Structures

- In the past nine months, Federal-Provincial-Territorial meetings and conferences of Ministers have occurred in the following areas:
 - Finance
 - Transportation and Highway Safety
 - Seniors
 - Labour Market
 - Agriculture
 - Sport and Recreation

- In the past nine months, Federal-Provincial-Territorial meetings and conferences of Deputy Ministers have occurred in the following areas:
 - Justice
 - Health
 - Social Services
 - Transport
 - Immigration
 - Industry

- **Over the next six months, Federal-Provincial-Territorial conferences and meetings of Ministers are scheduled in the following areas:**

- **Agriculture**
- **Housing**
- **Health**
- **Aboriginal Affairs and Aboriginal Groups**

- **Over the next six months, Federal-Provincial-Territorial meetings of Deputy Ministers are scheduled in the following areas:**

- **International Trade**
- **Housing**
- **Justice**
- **Status of Women**
- **Forestry**
- **Environment**
- **Agriculture**
- **Public Works and Government Services**
- **Industry**

Annex 2

1. Conferences - Distribution by Sector
 Figure 13: 1990-91 to 1994-95 Intergovernmental meetings - Distribution by Sector¹

	1994-95	1993-94 ¹	1992-93 ¹	1991-92 ¹	1990-91 ¹
Agriculture	3	4	4	4	7
Citizenship and Immigration	1	-	-	-	-
Co-operatives	-	2	2	2	1
Constitution	-	-	58	12	1
Economy	1	2	-	1	-
Education	6	2	4	1	-
Emergency Preparedness	2	3	-	-	-
Environment	4	8	6	7	12
Finance	-	-	-	-	1
Fisheries	4	3	-	-	-
Health	8	7	2	3	1
Heritage	1	1	2	4	8
Housing	3	3	3	3	4
Human Resources and Social Services	4	13	12	5	8
Industry	2	2	6	5	7
Intergovernmental Affairs	2	3	2	2	2
Justice and Solicitor General	4	6	3	5	11
Local Government	2	1	1	1	1
Native/Aboriginal Affairs	3	6	1	1	-
Natural Resources	7	5	4	12	7
Northern Development	-	1	1	1	-
Public Works and Government Services	1	1	1	-	1
Sports and Recreation	5	1	8	8	9
Status of Women	1	1	1	3	1
Trade	5	2	6	6	3
Transport	4	1	1	-	1
Total	73	78	128	86	86

* As of January 16, 1995.

¹ These figures have been adjusted according to a revised list of sectors established in April 1994 to reflect the re-organization of governments over the past several years. In addition, First Ministers' and Premiers' meetings are no longer listed separately and are grouped under "Intergovernmental Affairs" when their agenda covers more than one sector.

Source: Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat 1995-96 Estimates

THE FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS

FISCAL TRANSFERS

- E.P.F.
- Equalization
- C.A.P.
- Other Transfers

TAX HARMONIZATION

- Tax Collection Agreements

plus

the exercise of federal tax powers

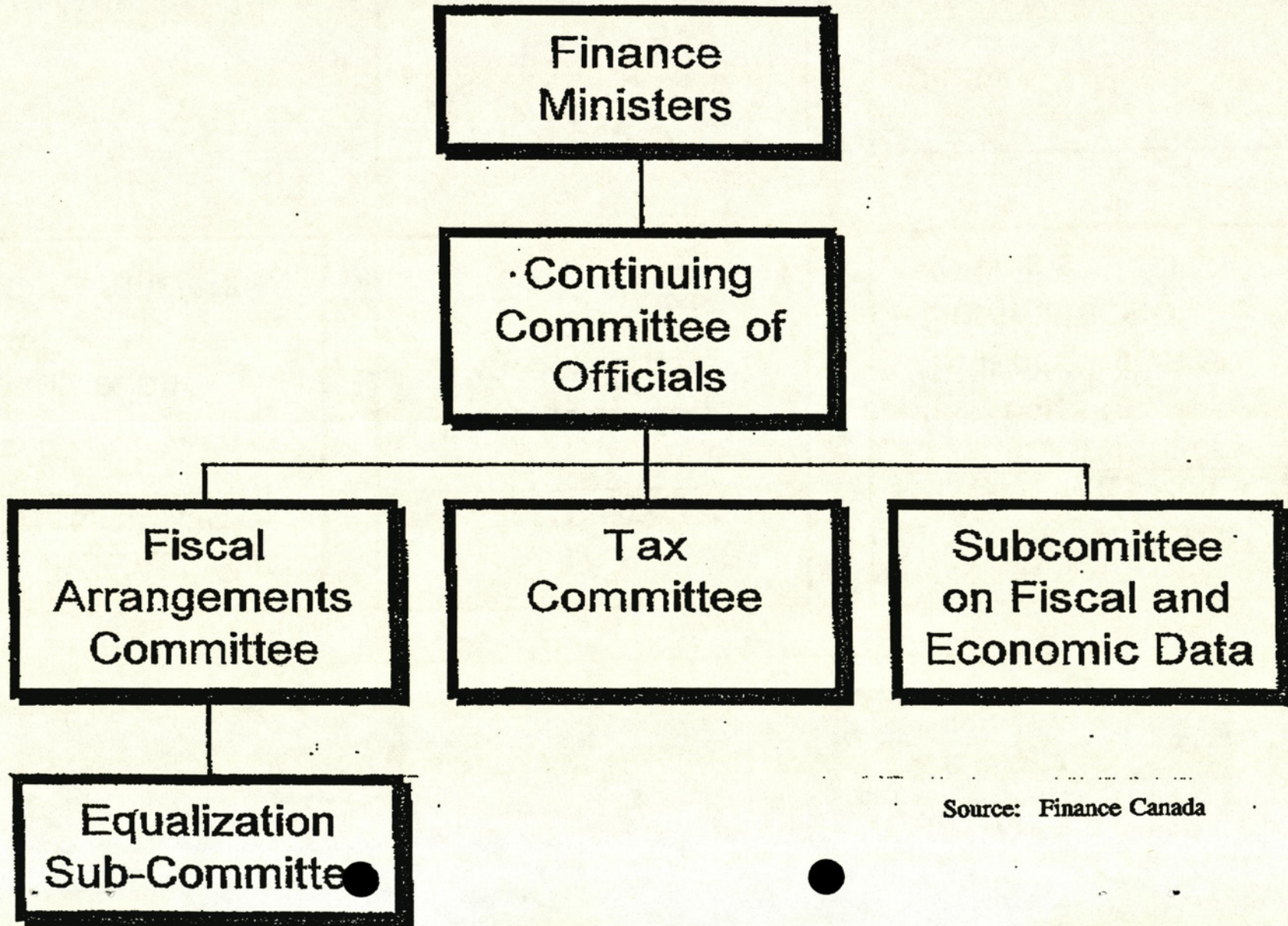
FISCAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY

- Meetings of Finance Ministers
- Committees of Officials

plus

responsibility for federal fiscal policy

FISCAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY



Source: Finance Canada

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL MEETINGS

CCO	June 7-8, 1990	Mont Gabriel
FAC	June 26-27, 1990	Calgary
<u>Eg. Subcommittee</u>	June 27, 1990	Calgary
<u>Eg. subcommittee</u>	September 8, 1990	Quebec City
FAC	September 18-19, 1990	Winnipeg
CCO	October 4-5, 1990	Montebello
<u>Eg. Subcommittee</u>	November 7-8, 1990	Halifax
FAC	November 29, 1990	Toronto
Ministers	December 20, 1990	Ottawa
CCO	January 22, 1991	Toronto
<u>Eg. Subcommittee</u>	January 23, 1991	Toronto
Ministers	January 27-28, 1991	Toronto
<u>Eg. Subcommittee</u>	April 8-9, 1991	Victoria
FAC	May 8, 1991	Montreal
CCO	May 22-23, 1991	Toronto
Ministers	June 10, 1991	Charlottetown
<u>Eg. Subcommittee</u>	June 27, 1991	Montreal
<u>Eg. Subcommittee</u>	August 27-28, 1991	Charlottetown
FAC	September 12, 1991	Vancouver
<u>Eg. Subcommittee</u>	October 16, 1991	Saskatoon
FAC	October 17, 1991	Saskatoon
CCO	October 30, 1991	Vancouver
<u>Eg. Subcommittee</u>	November 18, 1991	Ottawa
<u>MTR Subcommittee</u>	November 19, 1991	Ottawa
Ministers	December 12-13, 1991	Ottawa
<u>MTR Subcommittee</u>	January 21, 1992	Ottawa
<u>Eg. Subcommittee</u>	January 22, 1992	Ottawa
CCO	January 27, 1992	Toronto
Ministers	January 30, 1992	Quebec City
FAC	May 13, 1992	Montreal
<u>MTR Subcommittee</u>	May 14-15, 1992	Montreal
<u>Eg. Subcommittee</u>	June 26, 1992	Fredericton
Ministers	June 17, 1992	Hull
<u>MTR Subcommittee</u>	August 12-13, 1992	Winnipeg
FAC	September 8-9, 1992	Vancouver
CCO	October 1-2, 1992	Montreal
CCO	October 20, 1992	Toronto
<u>Eg. Subcommittee</u>	November 3, 1992	Ottawa
<u>MTR Subcommittee</u>	November 4, 1992	Ottawa
Ministers	December 16-17, 1992	Ottawa

Note: CCO = Continuing Committee of Officials (deputy ministers)
 FAC = Fiscal Arrangements Committee (assistant deputy ministers)