

News Release

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CANADA COMMEMORATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF SIGNING OF UNITED NATIONS CHARTER

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet today announced that Canada will join with other UN member states in commemorating the 50th anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Charter, on June 26 in San Francisco.

"We are proud of the role Canada has played in making the UN the premier forum for international co-operation," said Mr Ouellet. "Its establishment in 1945 followed the most devastating conflict humankind has ever known and many thought it would never succeed. Outstanding Canadians such as Lester Pearson, Norman Robertson, George Ignatieff, Louis Rasminsky, J.L. Delisle, Charles Ritchie, John Holmes, Escott Reid, General A.G.L. McNaughton and John Humphries dedicated themselves to the aspirations outlined in the UN Charter. Since then, thousands of Canadians - peacekeepers, medical personnel, technical experts, human rights observers and diplomats - have followed their example."

Mr. Ouellet noted that while this anniversary offers a chance to reflect on the many outstanding achievements of the UN since 1945, it also provides an opportunity to consider ways to make the institution more responsive to the needs of the post-Cold War era. "Canada is working diligently to assist the UN in its efforts to become more effective in meeting the challenges it faces in the next 50 years," he added.

Canada's UN Ambassador, Robert Fowler, along with John English, M.P. and official biographer of Lester Pearson, will attend the celebration in San Francisco, where the Charter was signed 50 years ago by Prime Minister Mackenzie King. Also present will be G.A. Gibson, an advisor to the original delegation. In addition, 160 Canadian school children will be there, all of whom are taking part in the musical production "Noah's Flood," which is Canada's main cultural contribution to the program.

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For further information, media representatives may contact:

Media Relations Office
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
(613) 995-1874



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