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New thrust for Canada's relations with the Commonwealth Caribbean

Secretary of State for External Affairs Mark MacGuigan emphasized the importance of the Commonwealth Caribbean to Canada and outlined the Canadian government's new policy towards the region, in a speech to the Canada/CARICOM Joint Trade and Economic Committee (JTEC) Meeting held in Jamaica, January 15-17. Dr. MacGuigan, who led the Canadian delegation to the meeting, also made visits to Barbados and St. Kitts-Nevis. Excerpts from the minister's speech to the inaugural plenary, follow:

...For our part, at the highest political levels, there is commitment to a new and dynamic thrust to the CARICOM relationship. In the past year, a comprehensive review of Canada's relations with the Commonwealth Caribbean has been commissioned, completed, considered and approved by the Canadian Cabinet.

We looked at commercial ties.... In recent years, our trade has broadened significantly and today Canada exports a wide range of goods and services such as telecommunication equipment, machinery, consulting services, consumer goods, food products and resource commodities in exchange for such imports as petroleum products, textiles and sugar from Trinidad and Tobago, clothing from the Leeward and Windward Islands, aluminum ores, alcoholic beverages and sugar from Guyana, fish and food products from Belize and sugar, sporting goods and clothing from Barbados. Further, the Caribbean has become a centre of interest for Canadian investors particularly in the banking, tourism and mineral sectors, as well as a source of over 140,000 new Canadians.

At the same time as the JTEC, about 40 Canadian businessmen and 25 Caribbean businessmen also met in Jamaica to discuss trade and investment opportunities in the Commonwealth Caribbean. The conference was organized by the Canadian Association for Latin America and Caribbean (CALA) and the Caribbean Association for Industry and Commerce (CAIC), with the support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

In today's perspective Canada/CARICOM trade is important to both parties, but neither is the other's major market. Canada supplies about 5 per cent of CARICOM imports and takes about 5 per cent of CARICOM exports. Canada's share of the Commonwealth Caribbean market has declined compared to the shares of the European Economic Community, the United States and Japan. In the 1950s, for example, Canada's share was about 17 per cent. By 1970, it had fallen to 9 per cent and by 1978 had declined to 5 per cent....

Investment

A number of your ministers have stressed to me how welcome Canadian business investment would be on their islands. We too hope that this adverse trend can be reversed. More mutually beneficial trade and investment flows must be stimulated. Our sponsorship of visiting businessmen for joint Canadian Association for Latin America and Caribbean (CALA)/Caribbean Association of Industry and Commerce (CAIC) consultations in parallel with this meeting shows that we are serious about this objective....

As you would expect, we also looked closely at our development co-operation relationship.... The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has disbursed approximately \$300 million since the inception of its program in the area in 1959. Indeed the region remains the highest *per capita* recipient of Canadian assistance. In the current year Canadian development assistance provided to the Commonwealth Caribbean will total about \$41 million. Thirty-one million dollars bilateral assistance is provided on a gov-

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Twelve years ago today...

Former Governor-General Roland Michener and Mrs. Michener began a month-long tour of four Caribbean countries; it was the first official state visit abroad by a Canadian governor general.

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