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CANADA TO ESTABLISH NEW PEACEBUILDING FUND

Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy and Don Boudria, Minister for International Co-operation and Minister responsible for La Francophonie, announced today that Canada will establish a special fund, financed by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), to help build peace in countries and regions racked by violence and war. The fund is an integral component of a new Canadian Peacebuilding Initiative.

"This is a new tool of diplomacy," said Mr. Axworthy. "It will support flexible and timely Canadian responses in critical situations where events are moving quickly." Mr. Axworthy outlined the purpose of the new program in a speech today at York University's Centre for International Security Studies.

"Cease-fires, peacekeeping forces and aid to refugees and displaced persons are vital in building peace," said Mr. Boudria. "But to make peace last, we need to rebuild the institutions of war-torn societies. This initiative will help us do that."

In his speech, Mr. Axworthy described the Peacebuilding Initiative as a response to one of the most significant challenges of the post-Cold War world: building sustainable peace in countries, such as those in the Great Lakes region of Africa, that are prone to recurring cycles of violence and where tragic internal conflict has profound regional implications.

Minister Axworthy stated that the Initiative will be launched with a formal consultation on peacebuilding to take place in conjunction with annual departmental human rights consultations with non-governmental organizations early in 1997. He also announced that CIDA will contribute \$10 million to the special Peacebuilding Fund, which will assist in filling urgent gaps in Canadian programming and act as a catalyst to promote new approaches and to mobilize Canadian talent and expertise. The Minister noted that he announced the third element of the Initiative, a roster of Canadian human rights experts, at the United Nations last month.

Minister Axworthy prefaced the announcement of the Initiative with an overview of the challenges posed by a new kind of war that includes ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia and hate propaganda in Rwanda. He noted that these situations have led to a re-examination of the notion of security by Canada and other countries, including Norway and Holland. Two key concepts have emerged from this review: human security and, as a means to achieve it, peacebuilding.

"The concept of human security recognizes that human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, good governance, sustainable development and social equity are as important to global peace as are arms control and disarmament," said Mr. Axworthy.

While noting that peacebuilding is an evolving concept, he described it as a set of measures that creates a sustainable infrastructure for human security. These measures provide the minimal conditions under which a country can implement social, political and economic development.

The Minister cited Haiti as an example of peacebuilding complementing peacekeeping, through programs that include training civilian police, institution building and promoting national reconciliation and economic rehabilitation.

Minister Axworthy noted the two distinct assets Canada can put to use in peacebuilding: Canadian expertise in nurturing our own democracy, and advanced information technology that can be used as a conduit for collecting, sharing and analysing information as well as a means of maintaining local capacity after the departure of Canadian experts.