News Release

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OUELLET INAUGURATES CANADIAN EMBASSY IN BEIRUT

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet today officially inaugurated Canada's embassy in Beirut, Lebanon. The embassy had been closed in 1985 owing to the conflict in Lebanon, and its personnel had been transferred to the Canadian embassy in Damascus, Syria. The embassy will be operational effective April 1, 1995.

"The reopening of our embassy in Beirut marks a turning point in Canada's relations with Lebanon. We are now in a better position to assist more effectively in the reconstruction of the country and to develop closer social, political and economic ties, particularly between the people of Lebanon and Canadians of Lebanese background," said Mr. Ouellet.

The Beirut embassy, with a staff of four, will provide consular and trade services. Following a decision by Citizenship and Immigration Minister Sergio Marchi, visa and immigration services will also be available in Beirut to better serve Lebanese applicants. Once the immigration section is operational, Lebanese applicants for visitor and immigrant visas will no longer need to travel outside their country to submit applications. The new immigration office will facilitate the handling of applications, documents and processing fees.

Canada's designated Ambassador to Lebanon, Daniel Marchand, will take up his post this spring, succeeding John McNee, currently Ambassador to Syria with concurrent accreditation to Lebanon. Until Mr. Marchand arrives, Denis Létourneau of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration will serve as Chargé d'Affaires in Beirut. The embassy is located in the Coolrite Building, at 434 Autostrade Jall-ed-Dib, Kaza Metin, Mount Lebanon, a suburb of Beirut.

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