

News Release

March 17, 1995

No. 54

UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS TO VISIT CANADA

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet today announced that the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. José Ayala-Lasso, will visit Canada March 20-25, 1995. This will be Mr. Ayala-Lasso's first official visit to Canada since his appointment on February 28, 1994.

"Human rights is a priority area of Canada's foreign policy. Mr. Ayala-Lasso's visit is a unique opportunity for Canadians to discuss the challenges of promoting and protecting human rights in today's world," said Mr. Ouellet.

While in Canada, Mr. Ayala-Lasso will visit Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal. In Ottawa, he will meet with Prime Minister Chrétien and Mr. Ouellet as well as other senior members of government. His talks will focus on issues such as preventive diplomacy and early warning, and the full integration of human rights activities into the political and developmental work of the UN and into its peacebuilding and peacekeeping operations. Mr. Ayala-Lasso will also meet with a number of Parliamentarians, human rights groups and academics.

In Toronto and Montreal, Mr. Ayala-Lasso will meet with non-governmental organizations and academics. He will also deliver a speech at the First Canadian conference on UN reform organized by the UN Association of Canada in Montreal.

Mr. Ayala-Lasso's mandate is to work for the promotion and protection of human rights around the world and to co-ordinate, rationalize and strengthen human rights activities and machinery within the UN system.

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Attached please find a biography of Mr. Ayala-Lasso and a context piece on human rights in Canadian Foreign Policy.

For further information, media representatives may contact:

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