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Canada and the Conference on International Economic Co-operation

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Allan J. MacEachen, has attended as co-chairman two meetings of the Conference on International Economic Co-operation with co-chairman Dr. Manuel Perez Guerrero, Venezuela's Minister of State for International Affairs.

In a statement to the House of Commons on February 5, Mr. MacEachen outlined as follows the origins of the Conference, its aims and the progress made in initiating discussions among the industrialized and developing countries:

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The Conference on International Economic Co-operation is a new venture in international diplomacy bringing together 27 participants — 19 developing countries and eight developed members, including the European Community. Seven of the developing countries are members of OPEC, whereas 12 are oil-importing countries. The membership of the Conference has been selected to be broadly representative of the interests of the world community as a whole, with the exception of Eastern Europe and China, which are not participating.

The use of co-chairmen from the two groups to head the Conference and the Commissions is a new technique in conferences of this kind. Limited but representative membership may ensure that any consensus reached at the Conference is broadly acceptable to the international community. It may also make it possible to replace the highly politicized and often sterile debate on international economic problems by a pragmatic and systematic approach to complex questions which cannot be resolved by rhetoric. Limited membership may also be conducive to better understanding and hence to a more earnest and direct attack on specific issues.

How CIEC evolved

The origins of this Conference are diverse and are reflected in its character. What began as a reaction to the quadrupling of petroleum prices in late 1973 has evolved over the past two years into a Conference designed to examine many of the world's major economic problems, in addition to those associated with energy. The Conference will undoubtedly address the various demands for changes in the

world's economic system which have been put forward by developing countries in the United Nations. Since the first impact of the oil price rise, Canada has been a consistent advocate of such a consumer/producer dialogue and has in particular advocated including the "innocent victims" — the most seriously affected developing countries — in the dialogue. I am therefore particularly gratified that the Conference can truthfully be described as a dialogue between developed and developing countries, between producers and consumers of petroleum, and between producers and consumers of other raw materials.

During the coming year, the Conference will attempt to reach agreement by consensus on a variety of important issues in the fields of energy, raw materials, development and finance. It is my hope that in the process it will make a positive contribution to a new era of international economic co-operation by fostering better understanding and by stimulating on-going work in other bodies such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Guidelines for Commissions

The Ministerial Meeting in December which President Giscard d'Estaing opened and which Dr. Perez Guerrero and I chaired, brought together Ministers from the 27 members of the Conference. We agreed on the creation of four Commissions (for energy, raw materials, development, and financial affairs). Each consists of 15 members,

