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TRAVEL ABROAD BY PROVINCIAL MINISTERS

The following is intended to answer enquiries received recently from several provinces about procedures relating to travel abroad by provincial ministers of the crown. Most of these procedures also apply to deputies and other senior officials travelling in an official capacity.

Travel abroad by provincial ministers of the crown (and their representatives) takes place within the context of federal responsibility for Canada's external relations, including trade, commerce and international development. The Secretary of State for External Affairs (SSEA), is responsible for coordinating visits and acts as the principal channel through which arrangements for visits are made in order to:

- (a) ensure coordination of visits so that they meet the objectives and maximize provincial results as well as, more generally, serve Canadian interests; and
- (b) facilitate contacts between provincial governments and foreign authorities with a view to promoting provincial interests and objectives.

This department, as well as the Canadian missions abroad, share with provincial authorities the desire to work towards the accomplishment of provincial objectives. To this end: (i) the Canadian mission accredited to a foreign government is responsible for making appointments with representatives of that government; (ii) with the exception of some calls by officials on technical departments, senior provincial officials are accompanied by Canadian mission officials during discussions with foreign government representatives; (iii) provincial premiers and ministers are accompanied by the head of the Canadian mission (or his/her representative) when meeting with cabinet-level representatives of the receiving government.

Official travel -- whether major or low key -- may be defined as involving non-personal financial resources. Ministers of the crown fall into a special category whether travelling officially or unofficially, and this department and host governments are both concerned with their security. Host governments have thus