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McDOUGALL SUPPORTS HONG KONG GOVERNOR'S PROPOSAL FOR GREATER DEMOCRACY

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, today expressed her support for a proposal by Hong Kong Governor Christopher Patten to establish a more democratic system within the framework of the Basic Law, which will act as Hong Kong's constitution after 1997.

"As a result of extensive economic, cultural and people ties, Canadians have an important stake in Hong Kong's future," said Mrs. McDougall. "We support Governor Patten's efforts to expand and broaden democracy in Hong Kong. We believe that democracy is the key to securing Hong Kong's future after 1997."

Among other things, Governor Patten proposes that the voting age be lowered to 18 and that voter representation be expanded so that every working person would be represented on the Legislative Council. Furthermore, the Executive would be subject to a regular Question Period. If accepted, the Governor's proposals would come into effect for the 1995 Hong Kong elections.

Governor Patten plans to be in Canada to participate in events surrounding Festival Hong Kong. The festival, which started on September 30, is taking place simultaneously in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal and is a major celebration of Hong Kong culture and friendship with Canada. The festival runs until November 15.

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