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APPOINTMENT OF SADRUDDIN AGA KHAN AS SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON QUESTION OF MASS EXODUSES OF POPULATIONS

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Dr. Mark MacGuigan, welcomes the announcement made today in Geneva by the Chairman of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Ambassador Carlos Calero Rodrigues (Brazil) concerning the appointment of Sadruddin Aga Khan as special rapporteur on the question of mass exoduses of populations.

The appointment was made pursuant to a Canadian proposal (Resolution 29 (XXXVII)) adopted on March 11 by the Commission on Human Rights. The resolution provided for "an individual of recognized international standing as special rapporteur" to study the question of mass exoduses and report his conclusions and recommendations to the next commission session in early 1982.

The commission's decision culminated three years of efforts by the Canadian government to focus international attention on the causes of the massive movements of population witnessed in recent years, particularly in Southeast Asia, in Afghanistan and in various parts of Africa and Latin America. Dr. MacGuigan said that Sadruddin Aga Khan's appointment is a first and important concrete step in the pursuit within the United Nations' system of solutions to problems at the root of refugee situations. Dr. MacGuigan, who is currently in Geneva to lead the Canadian delegation at the African refugee conference, will be meeting with Sadruddin Aga Khan today.

Sadruddin Aga Khan, 48, has been associated with the United Nations' system for over 22 years. After graduating from Harvard University in 1954, he did post-graduate work at the Harvard Centre for Middle Eastern Studies. In 1958 he became a consultant to the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for Afro-Asian projects and has held important positions in the United Nations since then. He was the United Nations' Deputy High Commissioner