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CANADA URGES ANGOLAN GOVERNMENT TO SUSPEND MILITARY OFFENSIVE

Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa) Christine Stewart, on behalf of Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet, today called on the Government of Angola to suspend its military offensive on the UNITA-controlled city of Huambo and urged both sides of the conflict to demonstrate the political will required to conclude a sustainable peace agreement.

"We are deeply concerned that the current intensification of military operations in the Huambo area could undermine the progress toward peace achieved during 10 months of negotiations in Lusaka," said Mrs. Stewart. "Squandering this opportunity to end the conflict could be disastrous for a country that has already suffered through two decades of war."

A peace agreement between UNITA and the Government of Angola is scheduled to be signed on November 15. However, in recent days, fighting has escalated throughout the country and government forces are advancing on the UNITA stronghold of Huambo in an operation that could jeopardize the peace process and prolong the civil war.

Canada continues to provide aid to the four million Angolans estimated by the United Nations to be in need of emergency assistance. This year, the Canadian International Development Agency is giving \$5.6 million in food aid and other emergency assistance to the victims of the conflict.

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