



No. 144

June 30, 1992

CANADA SUPPORTS ZAIRE'S NATIONAL SOVEREIGN CONFERENCE

The Honourable Monique Landry, Minister for External Relations and International Development, will meet today with Monseigneur Laurent Monsengwo-Pasinya, Metropolitan Bishop of Kisangani and President of the National Sovereign Conference (NSC) of Zaire, who is visiting Canada June 29-30.

The NSC is an assembly of representatives from Zaire's political, economic and social sectors, formed in response to popular pressure to establish democratic institutions. Writing a new constitution and democratizing the country's political institutions are the main features of the NSC mandate.

"Canada deplores the unstable situation in Zaire and hopes that an agreement will soon be reached to pave the way for a transition to democracy and for the reforms essential to the country's recovery," said Mrs. Landry.

Because of the state of insecurity and the human rights violations in Zaire, Canada suspended its co-operation program in 1991. However, Canada has maintained humanitarian aid, targeted toward the poorest sectors of the population. In concert with other countries and organizations, Canada is also prepared to support the electoral process that may emerge from the National Conference.

- 30 -

For further information, media representatives may contact:

Media Relations Office
External Affairs and International Trade Canada
(613) 995-1874

or

Isabelle Hudon
Minister's Office
(819) 953-3149