

**CANADA-ISRAEL BILATERAL RELATIONS**

Canada has strongly supported the State of Israel since its foundation in 1948 and is firmly committed to that country's well-being as an independent state in the Middle East, within secure and recognized boundaries. Over the years, we have developed a broad framework of agreements and understandings with Israel on such diverse matters as cultural relations, agriculture, trade, industrial research and development, health and Canadian studies.

The depth of our relationship is exemplified by numerous official links and a vast range of private contacts. In 1989, President and Mrs. Herzog made a state visit to Canada, and, in November 1990 and March 1991, the Secretary of State for External Affairs (SSEA) visited Israel. The SSEA also meets regularly with the Israeli Foreign Minister, notably on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly. In March 1993, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres made an official visit to Canada. There have also been frequent exchanges of official visits by federal and provincial cabinet ministers and members of Parliament. In addition, tens of thousands of Canadians and Israelis exchange private visits each year.

During the recent Gulf crisis, Canada contributed \$500 000 in humanitarian assistance to Israel. The contribution was channelled through the Canadian Red Cross to its Israeli counterpart, the Magen David Adom, for the purchase of emergency medical equipment and other relief supplies. At the request of the Israeli government, Canada also provided 10 000 gas masks to the Occupied Territories.

Trade remains an important aspect of the relationship. Israel is one of Canada's largest trading partners in the Middle East and its third-largest source of imports from the region. Two-way trade for 1992 was reasonably balanced. Canada and Israel both actively promote their exports and have signed a number of agreements, memoranda of understanding and a taxation treaty to encourage further trade. In April 1992, a Joint Economic Commission was held in Ottawa; the next meeting is scheduled for March 1994. The composition of Canadian exports reflects a balanced mix of industrial raw materials and fully manufactured goods. Leading Canadian exports include crude and refined sulphur, aluminium, lumber, aircraft engines, and copper and zinc products. Israel's largest exports to Canada include diamonds, appliances, yarns, agricultural products and medical equipment.

During the visit of Foreign Minister Peres, agreement was reached on a Canada-Israel Industrial Research and Development Fund, which commits each country to provide \$5 million over three years to stimulate bilateral industrial and technical co-operation.

**November 1993**