

outside academics from all parts of Canada, have been brainstorming to identify the best means for Canada to provide tangible and timely assistance for the success of Palestinian autonomy. I expect specific and considered recommendations within the coming weeks.

Among the areas we have identified is assistance in the organization of next spring's elections. Canada has been approached on the subject in the past and I will be conveying our availability.

Similarly, Canada will be looking at a possible role in support of any international monitors to oversee the implementation of the agreement.

We shall also concentrate on enhancing Palestinian capabilities by providing the training required at various levels to set up effective, responsible public institutions. Here again, we would operate along the lines of the priorities indicated by the Palestinians themselves.

Canadians have respected institutions, private and public, federal, provincial and municipal, such as Statistics Canada, Elections Canada, the International Development Research Centre, the RCMP, and others which could provide invaluable assistance to emerging Palestinian institutions.

One practical way to ensure effective delivery of our assistance in co-operation with emerging Palestinian institutions may be to establish a local aid office, perhaps in Gaza. Subject to required consultations, we intend to proceed.

All of these efforts, combined with those of our international partners and NGOs [non-government organizations] will be needed to build a lasting peace in the Middle East. But let me caution that this truly historic achievement is only a beginning.

Many obstacles remain in achieving an overall and enduring peace for the Middle East. Canada will continue to work with all the parties to build on the opportunity created by this achievement, in order to obtain similar success in the other areas of the peace process.

In so doing, we must be sensitive to the concerns of Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, who have also to conclude with Israel the kind of agreement signed today.

As part of our continuing efforts to engage the parties in the multilateral peace talks, I might add that Canada is hosting in Sydney, Nova Scotia, a Confidence Building Seminar as part of the Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group; it began yesterday and will end tomorrow.