



news release

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CANADIAN TROOPS TO SERVE AS TRAINERS FOR THE CAMBODIA MINE ACTION CENTRE

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet and Minister of National Defence David Collette today announced that Canada will send 12 Canadian Forces personnel to Cambodia to provide training and administrative support to the Cambodia Mine Action Centre (CMAC). The personnel will be provided through the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), which is co-ordinating international support for demining operations in Cambodia. The Canadians will constitute half of the 25-member international technical advisory group to the CMAC.

"Cambodia has the worst problem of uncleared landmines in the world. Agriculture is impossible because of mines littered in farmland. Trade is being strangled by mined roads. I'm proud of this Canadian effort to train Cambodians so that they can overcome this most serious obstacle to the country's development," said Mr. Ouellet.

"Canadians should be proud of the assistance our military personnel have provided to the people of Afghanistan, Kuwait, and now Cambodia in mine recognition and disposal. Our contribution to this critical endeavour will help the Cambodian people return to a more normal way of life," said Mr. Collette.

The CMAC is a Cambodian government agency that trains demining personnel, co-ordinates demining operations, and provides mine awareness education for the public. For nearly two years, Canadian military personnel have been key players in the CMAC operation, with the commander of the Canadian contingent to the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) serving as Assistant Director of the CMAC.

Approximately 215 Canadian military personnel participated in UNTAC from March 1992 to November 1993. In addition to serving in transportation, observation, and headquarters roles, Canadian Forces personnel supported the CMAC as an extension of UNTAC's engineering planning cell. After the end of UNTAC's mandate in November, two Canadian Forces personnel continued to work with the CMAC, preparatory to the deployment of the UNDP mission.