

News Release

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OUELLET PLEASED WITH RESULTS OF 11TH CANADA-MEXICO JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING

At the close of the 11th annual Canada-Mexico Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC) meeting today, Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet expressed satisfaction with progress on a number of key issues, and with the two countries' determination to further deepen their relationship.

"With the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement, we have moved on to a new phase in our bilateral relationship," said Mr. Ouellet. "The extent of ministerial participation at this and at recent JMCs is an indication of the breadth of the relationship – we now need to deepen it by setting goals towards which we can work as we enter the 21st century."

Both Mr. Ouellet and his Mexican counterpart, José Ángel Gurría recognized the need for ministerial contacts and consultations that will strengthen the relationship in key sectors. To that end, Mr. Ouellet announced that the two governments will establish a binational steering committee, which will produce a declaration that will serve as a framework for the relationship into the next century. The two ministers will review the paper at next year's JMC.

Mr. Ouellet noted that Canada and Mexico signed four agreements during this year's JMC: the Agreement on Social Security and the administrative arrangement that would implement that agreement; a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Mexican seasonal agricultural workers in Canada; and an annex to the MOU on Land Transportation that was signed last year, which will address technical assistance and training programs.

In their talks, Mr. Ouellet and Mr. Gurría, discussed the Mexican economic crisis and Canada's confidence that a full recovery of the Mexican economy is underway. The two ministers also discussed the situation in Chiapas and the determination of the Mexican government to reach a long-term, negotiated solution; the difficult task ahead in Haiti of strengthening and consolidating

