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QUELLET COMMENTS ON RUSSIAN ELECTIONS, ADOPTION OF NEW CONSTITUTION IN RUSSIA

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet today commented on the results of Russia's first multiparty elections and the adoption of a democratic constitution. Mr. Ouellet also reaffirmed Canada's support for President Yeltsin's program of reform.

"That democratic elections were held and the constitution approved are significant achievements. However, the strong showing by extreme parties shows that the road to reform will be difficult and that many challenges lie ahead. We hope that President Yeltsin and the members of the Federal Assembly, whatever their political persuasion, will work together constructively to develop the consensus on reform that Russia needs," said Mr. Ouellet.

The Minister noted that, for the first time in their history, Russians themselves have established the framework for constitutional government. This fundamental law entrenches basic freedoms, as well as civil, minority and property rights.

Sixteen Canadians were among 1000 international observers who fanned out across Russia to assess the vote. The head of Canada's delegation, the Honourable Warren Allmand has said that, despite some minor irregularities, the election was fair and free and an honest attempt to move toward democracy. Earlier today, Mr. Allmand gave Minister Ouellet a detailed report by telephone from Moscow.

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For further information, media representatives may contact:

Media Relations Office
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
(613) 995-1874