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CANADA, FRANCE AND THE BANFF CENTRE FOR THE ARTS PARTICIPATE IN AN ARTISTIC EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet today announced the establishment of a program by the French Embassy in Canada, the Banff Centre for the Arts and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade to strengthen artistic exchanges between France and Canada. Mr. Ouellet made the announcement at a signing ceremony in Ottawa attended by Alfred Siefert-Gaillardin, Ambassador of France, and Carol Philips, Vice-President and Director of the Banff Centre for the Arts.

Mr. Ouellet emphasized that Canada regarded the deepening of cultural relations with France as important and added that he was pleased that the Banff Centre for the Arts was the focal point for the artistic exchange program. "For the first time, Canada and France are co-operating in establishing an 'artists-in-residence' program to encourage the artistic expression of French and Canadian artists through joint creative activities," said Mr. Ouellet.

During their stay in Banff, Canadian and French artists will develop and produce new works in the artistic disciplines practised at the Banff Centre for the Arts. The Centre will manage this program in close co-operation with the French Embassy and the Arts and Letters Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

The French Embassy and the Department will each provide a grant of \$25 000 to the Banff Centre for the Arts for the current fiscal year. Funding for this initiative was provided for in the February 1995 federal budget and is therefore built into the existing fiscal framework.

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