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ESTABLISHMENT OF THE "INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT"

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, and the Minister for External Relations, the Honourable Monique Landry, today announced the government's intention to establish a centre for international cooperation for the promotion of human rights and the development and strengthening of democratic institutions.

This new institution, to be known as the "International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development" will be established as a Crown Corporation. Its primary focus will be cooperation between Canada and developing countries, and for this purpose it will be financed out of Canada's Official Development Assistance funds. The new Centre may, over time, seek additional funding from other public and private sources. This will allow it to undertake cooperative activities with developed countries, if it so wishes.

The original proposal for an institution of this type was made in 1986 by the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and of the House of Commons on Canada's International Relations. The proposal was accepted in principle by the Government in December of the same year. Last January, the two Ministers asked Professor Gisèle Côté-Harper, of Laval University, and Dr. John Courtney, of the University of Saskatchewan, to provide recommendations on an approach for the establishment of the new institution. Their report was made public today by Mr. Clark and Mrs. Landry. The two Ministers thanked Professor Côté-Harper and Dr. Courtney for their contribution and noted the very wide range of Canadian and international groups which they consulted during the preparation of their report.

The Ministers noted that certain details regarding the mandate and organization of the Centre were yet to be worked out and that some of the recommendations of the report were still under study.

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