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CANADA DESIGNATES OBSERVERS TO GUATEMALA ELECTIONS

The Right Honourable Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs announced today that the Canadian Government has accepted the invitation of the Guatemalan Foreign Minister Mr. Fernando Andrade Diaz-Duran to send official observers to the combined presidential, congressional and municipal elections to be held in that country on November 3. Mr. Clark said that he has designated the following persons as official Canadian observers: Mr. Gordon Fairweather, Chief Commissioner, Canadian Human Rights Commission, who will lead the Canadian team; Mr. Warren Bailie, Chief Election Officer of Ontario; and M. Louis Lavoie, Director of Operations, Elections Canada.

Mr. Clark indicated that the decision to designate observers for these elections in the difficult circumstances that prevail in Guatemala was consistent with the Canadian Government's desire to support positive developments in Central America that can help lead to peace, stability and representative government and are thus consistent with the spirit of the Contadora initiative. Mr. Clark expressed the hope that these elections will lead to a genuine transition to civilian democratic government in Guatemala. The Canadian Government has been assured that the observers will be provided with support facilities to permit full verification of the electoral process in its different phases, and will be allowed to observe the elections in any location of their choosing. He emphasized the importance of the complete freedom of the observers to determine and make known their independent judgement on the fairness and nature of the elections and the election process.