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CANADIANS EN ROUTE TO HAITI ON OAS ELECTION MISSION

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, announced today that 10 Canadians will participate in an Organization of American States (OAS) mission monitoring the general elections being held in Haiti on December 16.

Mr. Clark underlined the importance of ensuring that voting is carried out in an open manner, free of violence, and emphasized Canada's wish to see Haitian democratic institutions strengthened. "We sincerely hope that, after encountering many difficulties, the process of national reconstruction in Haiti can now move forward," said the Minister.

The 10 Canadian observers, who were recommended by Elections Canada, will join the OAS mission in Port-au-Prince today. On election day, these observers, many of whom have already been involved in other similar missions, will visit a number of polling stations throughout the country to observe the election. The mission will report to the Secretary-General of the OAS.

Last October, 15 Canadians observed the registration of voters in Haiti as part of an OAS mission. In addition to the new observer group arriving today, 10 Canadian military officers are already participating as security experts in the UN mission to monitor the conduct of the Haitian elections (ONUVEH).

A list of the Canadian observers is attached.

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