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McDOUGALL WELCOMES KOREAN RAPPROCHEMENT

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, today welcomed the Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression, Exchanges and Co-operation signed by the Prime Ministers of the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) on December 13.

"We congratulate both governments on this historic agreement, which is an important step toward lessening tensions on the Korean peninsula," said Mrs. McDougall.

The Agreement, signed in Seoul during the fifth round of meetings between the Prime Ministers of North and South Korea held December 11-13, is the first framework for inter-Korean relations agreed between the two governments since the end of hostilities in 1953. The binding agreement, which is subject to ratification in both capitals, provides for the retention of the current armistice agreements until a peace treaty can be signed between North and South Korea and co-operation in a number of important areas. It also establishes a security and arms control process to reduce armaments, including the elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

Canada continues to call for North Korea to sign a full-scope nuclear safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency and to permit international inspection of its nuclear facilities, in accordance with its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

- 30 -

For further information, media representatives may contact:

Media Relations Office
External Affairs and International Trade Canada
(613) 995-1874