

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Don Jamieson, announced today that Canada has agreed to host the Second Meeting of the Club of the Friends of the Sahel. The Meeting will be held in Ottawa from May 30th to June 1st 1977 at the Conference Centre of the Department of External Affairs.

The Club of the Friends of the Sahel is an informal group of countries and regional or international organizations, created under the sponsorship of the OECD to contribute to the planning and coordination of middle and long term economic aid to the Sahel States. One of the objectives of the Club is to support the efforts of the Interstate Committee for the Fight against Drought in the Sahel, known as the CILSS.

The CILSS was created in 1973 by the Sahel States themselves. It is a Committee at the ministerial level whose aim is to coordinate, on a regional basis, all the actions of the member States against drought.

Canada, through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), is one of the countries that provided assistance to the Sahel countries in their fight against drought and will continue to do so in conformity with the Canadian Government policy to give priority, in its aid programmes abroad, to the less developed countries. It is therefore in a spirit of international solidarity with the Sahel countries, and of cooperation with the other aid donors, that Canada will welcome to Ottawa the members of the Club of the Friends of the Sahel.

Explanatory notes on Canadian participation in the "Club du Sahel" and on Canadian relations with Francophone Africa are attached.