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CANADIAN CONTRIBUTION TO THE DISASTER RELIEF FUND FOR VICTIMS OF THE JANUARY 1 EARTHQUAKE IN THE AZORES ISLANDS

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Flora MacDonald, announced today that Canada will make an additional \$50,000 contribution to the Canadian Red Cross for transmission to the International Committee of the Red Cross disaster relief fund for victims of the January 1 earthquake in the Azores Islands. Flora MacDonald pointed out that the \$25,000 Canadian contribution to the Canadian Red Cross announced January 2 has already been spent in acquiring tents for the victims. This brings the total Canadian Government's cash contribution to \$75,000. The funds are being provided from CIDA's Emergency Humanitarian Relief Fund.

Flora MacDonald also announced that Canada was working closely with the Government of Portugal in organizing a joint Canada/Portuguese airlift of large amounts of relief supplies collected from across Canada by Portuguese Canadians many of whom are originally from the Azores. A Canadian Armed Forces Boeing 707 cargo aircraft will leave for the Azores this weekend with more than 35 tons of urgently required goods.

In addition, three representatives of the Fund Raising Committee for Earthquake Victims of the Azores as well as an official of the Department of External Affairs will travel on the flight to gain first-hand impressions of the relief operations underway on the islands.

Flora MacDonald welcomed the opportunity to respond both quickly and positively to the initiative of the Portuguese Canadians in raising relief supplies for the earthquake victims.

Flora MacDonald was pleased to note that her colleague the Minister of Employment and Immigration, Ron Atkey, is sending an immigration officer to the Azores this weekend to expedite the processing of outstanding immigration cases.