



news release

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SECRETARY OF STATE STEWART TO ATTEND OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO ELECT NEW SECRETARY-GENERAL

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet today announced that Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa) Christine Stewart will travel to Washington to attend the March 27 special General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) to elect a new Secretary-General.

"Mrs. Stewart's presence underscores the importance that Canada attaches to the OAS. Sound leadership is a critical requirement for the organization to remain effective," said Mr. Ouellet.

"Canada is strongly committed to working with the new Secretary-General on matters of common concern, including the promotion of democracy, economic and social development, and hemispheric security," added Mrs. Stewart.

Canada has declared its support for Colombian President César Gaviria whom it considers to be the best candidate to lead the OAS in the years ahead. Canada has also expressed the view that the new Secretary-General be chosen primarily on the basis of personal and professional qualifications for the position, rather than on other considerations such as national origin or rotationality. The winning candidate will succeed Joao Clemente Baena Soares, who, in June 1994, celebrates 10 years as OAS Secretary-General.

During her visit to Washington, Mrs. Stewart will meet with representatives of various hemispheric organizations, including the Pan-American Health Organization and the Inter-American Development Bank, as well as with representatives of various think tanks involved in Latin American issues.

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