

PRESS RELEASE



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The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, announced today that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Felix Schnyder, will pay a courtesy visit to Ottawa on March 31 and April 1 and 2. Canada is one of the main supporters of the refugee programme and the High Commissioner, who assumed his present duties in 1961, made similar visits in 1961, 1962 and 1963 in order to exchange views with Canadian officials on the work of his Office, on the various international refugee problems, and on the contribution which Canada can make towards their solution.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was established in 1951 to succeed the International Refugee Organization. Its role is to promote the international protection of refugees and the search for permanent solutions to their problems through voluntary repatriation, assimilation within international communities and resettlement.

In recent years Canada has contributed \$290,000 annually to the budget of the Office which is financed through voluntary contributions from Member States and non-governmental agencies. Since the Second World War Canada has taken in over 300,000 refugees and since 1951 has contributed over \$3,000,000 to the