



news release

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CANADA TO PARTICIPATE IN SPECIAL CONFERENCE ON THE BIOLOGICAL AND TOXIN WEAPONS CONVENTION

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet today announced that Canada will participate in the Special Conference on the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention in Geneva, from September 19 to 30.

"Canada is strongly committed to strengthening the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention to prevent the proliferation of such weapons throughout the world. Effective verification provisions will be the key," said Mr. Ouellet.

When it was opened for signature in 1972, the Convention did not make any provision for the type of verification that has come to be associated with rigorous arms control and disarmament agreements. A Group of Experts has been working for the past two years to identify and evaluate potential verification measures to better address this situation.

Canada's main objectives for the Conference are:

- to obtain agreement on a mandate to negotiate and draft a Protocol to monitor compliance with the Convention, including measures such as mandatory declarations, visits and inspections, and voluntary information sharing; and
- to establish an Ad Hoc Committee, open to all States Parties, that will hold formal negotiations to fulfil the mandate.

The Ad Hoc Committee's work is expected to culminate at the Fourth Review Conference to be held in 1996, with the adoption of a compliance protocol and a considerably strengthened Convention.

More than 130 states are party to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. In 1972, Canada signed and ratified the Convention, which came into force in 1975.

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