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CANADA WELCOMES CAMEROON'S ENTRY INTO COMMONWEALTH

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet extended Canada's congratulations to Cameroon on its entry into the Commonwealth, which was announced earlier today by the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Chief Emeka Anyaoku. Cameroon will officially join the Commonwealth on November 1.

"Having sponsored Cameroon's membership, Canada is very pleased to welcome this country as the Commonwealth's newest and 52nd member. Commonwealth membership should contribute positively to the process of strengthening democracy in Cameroon. In this regard, Canada looks forward to early progress in such areas as local elections, press freedom and decentralization," said Mr. Ouellet.

Today's announcement paves the way for Cameroon's participation in the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Auckland, New Zealand, in mid-November. Cameroon is, after Canada, the largest country with English and French as its official languages. It joins Canada, Dominica, Mauritius, St. Lucia, Seychelles and Vanuatu as members of both the Commonwealth and la Francophonie.

Mr. Ouellet commended Senator Gildas Molgat, Speaker of the Senate, for having represented Canada on a recent high-level mission to advise Secretary-General Anyaoku on Cameroon's membership.

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