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MINISTERS LAUNCH CONSULAR AWARENESS PROGRAM

Secretary of State for External Affairs Barbara McDougall and Minister for External Relations and International Development Monique Landry today launched, in Vancouver, the Consular Awareness Program entitled "Bon Voyage, but . . .," an initiative of External Affairs and International Trade Canada. The launch is the starting point for a series of visits by department officials to various provincial capitals concluding in Halifax on May 17.

"The Canadian consular service has a proud tradition of assisting Canadians abroad," Mrs. McDougall said. "The significance of consular services, as witnessed by the recent work of officials in Baghdad and Kuwait, is important in helping Canadians avoid difficulties when travelling and living abroad."

"Currently, there are some 450 Canadians in prison abroad; some are waiting years for trial, others are subject to terrible conditions. Canadians must recognize that when abroad they are more vulnerable to serious punishment and that there is often little recourse after conviction," Mme Landry said. "The 'Bon Voyage, but...' program offers Canadians practical advice on preparing for safe travel