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FLORA MacDONALD TO REPRESENT CANADA AT SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, announced that the Honourable Flora MacDonald, as Chair of the Board of Governors of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), will head the Canadian delegation to a meeting of South Pacific Forum Dialogue Partners in Honiara, Solomon Islands, July 10-11.

The meeting of the Dialogue partners follows the annual conference of the South Pacific Forum, which brings together all the independent states of the South Pacific, including Australia and New Zealand.

"Canada is committed to strengthening its relations with the South Pacific," said Mrs. McDougall. "I believe the Forum Dialogue will provide an excellent opportunity to engage the leaders of the South Pacific in a constructive exchange on areas of common interest such as economic development, the environment and climate change."

Canada will also raise the issue of overfishing with the Forum countries, in view of their strong support for Canada's proposal to hold an international conference on high seas fisheries. The resolution was adopted by an overwhelming majority at the UN Conference on Environment and Development in June.

The South Pacific Forum was established in 1971 to provide an opportunity for independent and self-governing states of the South Pacific to discuss a wide range of common issues and problems, such as the environment, common security and trade.

Canada has been a Dialogue partner since 1989 when the partnership began. The other partners are the United States, France, Japan, the United Kingdom and the People's Republic of China.

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