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CENTRAL AMERICAN SUMMIT

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, announced that, on his instructions, the Heads of Mission in Ottawa of the five Central America republics were called to a meeting today with senior officials of the Department of External Affairs. Officials conveyed the Minister's congratulations on the most recent efforts of the five Presidents to breathe new life into the Central American peace process, and went on to make the following points:

- means should be found to stop the debilitating civil conflicts and to find peaceful alternatives to violence, on both sides of these conflicts;
- the undertakings in the joint declaration with respect to civil and political rights should be pursued quickly and effectively; and
- there should be a concerted effort by all governments to secure and guarantee the basic human rights of their peoples.

Mr. Clark noted in particular the joint declaration of the Presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua following their meeting in Costa del Sol, El Salvador February 13 and 14 which, he said, "gives grounds for renewed optimism, after several months of uncertainty, that the political will to attack the roots of their regional problems still lives". He also noted the specific commitments by the Government of Nicaragua with regard to the holding of early elections, release of prisoners and an end to press censorship.

Mr. Clark once again pledged to continue to do everything possible to address the economic and social roots of unrest in Central America. He went on to say that: "Canada also stands ready, through the United Nations, to take an active part in the design and implementation of an agreed security verification mechanism for Central America, provided that it is both practical and workable".

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Secretary of State
for
External Affairs

Secrétaire d'État
aux
Affaires extérieures

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