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MINISTER RESPONDS TO REPORT ON OAS

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, recently tabled in the House of Commons a letter responding to a report by the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade concerning Canada's membership in the Organization of American States (OAS).

"I agree with the Standing Committee's view that Canada should play an active, independent and effective role as a Member," stated Mr. Clark. He said that Canada is active in the Permanent Council and committees of the OAS, especially in efforts to make the OAS more effective and relevant. Canada was also an active participant in the twentieth general assembly of the OAS in June, where its proposals -- to create a Unit for Democratic Development and to hold a meeting of OAS heads of state or government -- were enthusiastically received and approved.

"We are endeavouring to expand our relations with other hemispheric countries and have already opened satellite offices in Ecuador and the Dominican Republic to serve better Canadian interests in those countries," stated Mr. Clark.

Noting the Standing Committee's focus on Central America, the Minister said, "The Government's new strategy towards Latin America is, of course, not limited to Central America but seeks to develop broad partnerships with other Latin American countries in areas such as trade, drugs and environment."

Attached to Mr. Clark's letter were specific responses to the recommendations made by the Standing Committee.

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