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CANADA AND LITHUANIA SIGN NUCLEAR CO-OPERATION AGREEMENT

Minister of Foreign Affairs André Ouellet today announced that Canada and Lithuania have signed an Agreement for Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy. The Agreement is a step towards ensuring the assistance of Canadian nuclear experts in upgrading safety systems and plant operations of Lithuania's nuclear reactors.

The Agreement was signed in Vilnius by Algimantas Stasiukynas, Lithuanian Minister of Energy, and Michael Philipps, Canada's Ambassador to Lithuania.

"This agreement marks the further advancement of the growing and productive relationship between Lithuania and Canada in the area of nuclear co-operation," said Mr. Ouellet. "It balances the need for safety while helping to fulfill the energy needs of Lithuania."

The Minister added that a number of programs, from training to safety analysis and conceptual engineering, have been undertaken in the last three years by the Atomic Energy Control Board of Canada and Ontario Hydro.

The Agreement will provide the necessary framework for the export of nuclear and other materials, equipment, and technology to improve the safety of the Russian-made Ignalina RBMK-type nuclear power plant, which fulfills a large proportion of Lithuania's energy needs. It also will ensure that activities are carried out in a manner consistent with Canada's nuclear non-proliferation policy, which requires that activities under the agreement be for peaceful purposes only.

- 30 -

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