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CANADA WELCOMES CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, today welcomed the approval of a Chemical Weapons Convention at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. When implemented, the Convention will succeed in eliminating a whole category of weapons of mass destruction.

"This Convention represents one of Canada's major arms control objectives," said Mrs. McDougall. "Ever since Canadian soldiers first came under gas attack in Ypres 77 years ago, Canada has advocated a total abolition of chemical weapons."

Formal negotiations on the Convention have been ongoing since 1984, although international discussions on a chemical weapons ban began in 1968. The document will now be forwarded to the United Nations, where Canada will co-sponsor a resolution calling for its adoption. A formal signing ceremony will be held in Paris, possibly as early as January 1993. The Convention will enter into force after 65 countries have ratified it.

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