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The Disarmament Bulletin

A review of Canada's arms control and disarmament activities

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Canada Signs Chemical Weapons Convention

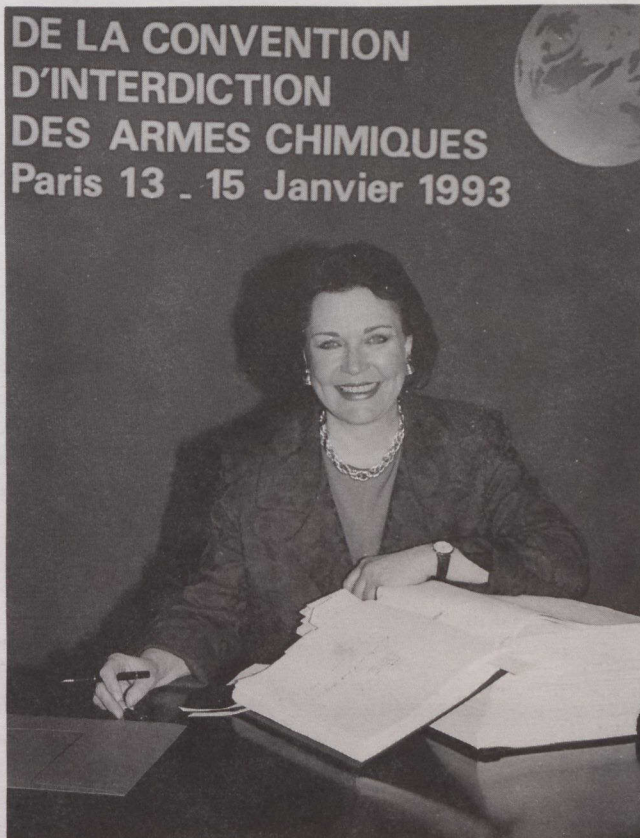
At a January 13 ceremony in Paris, External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall signed, on Canada's behalf, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, known in short form as the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The CWC was negotiated over the past six years in the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament, of which Canada is a member. Once it enters into force, the CWC will prohibit the development, production, stockpiling, retention and use of chemical weapons and their precursors.

"I am honoured to sign this Convention on behalf of Canada and it is my hope that it signals an end to a tragic chapter in world history," said Mrs. McDougall. "Canadians can take special pride in the conclusion of this treaty. The total abolition of chemical weapons has been one of our arms control objectives ever since Canadian soldiers experienced the horror of gas attacks during the First World War."

Canada was one of 130 countries to become an original signatory to the Convention. The major non-signatories include Iraq, Libya and North Korea. The Convention will come into force 180 days after ratification by 65 countries, but not earlier than January 13, 1995. Canada will ratify the CWC sometime during the next two years, once appropriate legislation is prepared and passed.

To implement the Convention, an Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is being established in the Hague. The Organization will comprise:

- a Conference of States Parties, composed of all signatories, which will meet on an annual basis;
- a 41-member rotating Executive Council, consisting of States Parties' representatives, elected for two-year terms (the Executive Council will have day-to-day



External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall at the CWC signing ceremony. Photo by Jean-Bernard Porée

SPECIAL ISSUE ON PEACEKEEPING

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