

# News Release

August 8, 1995

No. 137

## CANADA WELCOMES SRI LANKAN POLITICAL PEACE INITIATIVE

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet today reiterated Canada's call for a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Sri Lanka and welcomed the Government of Sri Lanka's proposal to create a new political order, which would create a "Union of Regions" with a high degree of devolved powers.

"This is a positive development, and we urge all parties in Sri Lanka to give careful consideration to the Government's proposal. Any initiative that points toward peace cannot be ignored," said Mr. Ouellet.

The Minister also stated: "The people of Sri Lanka have suffered greatly for over a decade and deserve peace. The continued loss of life in engagements between the Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) underlines the futility of continuing to pursue a military solution. Moreover, senseless attacks such as the suicide bombing in Colombo on August 7, which killed over 20 innocent people, must be strongly condemned. We urge the LTTE to give careful attention to this opportunity that now exists for a peaceful solution."

Mr. Ouellet and Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific) Raymond Chan, who was in Sri Lanka in early June, have stated on several occasions that Canada is committed to peace in Sri Lanka and is willing to assist with the peace process if requested to do so by the parties to the conflict.

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For further information, media representatives may contact:

Media Relations Office  
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade  
(613) 995-1874



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