

The Department of External Affairs announces that the Honourable Jean-Pierre Goyer, Minister of Supply and Services, and Receiver-General of Canada, will represent the Canadian Government at the opening ceremonies of the "Route de l'unité et de l'amitié canadienne" in Niger, September 20-22. He will be accompanied by the Canadian Ambassador to Niger, Mr. Michel de Goumois, the interim Vice-President of the Canadian International Development Agency, Mr. Pierre Sicard, and other representatives of the Department of External Affairs and the Canadian International Development Agency.

The Minister's programme will consist of visits to Niamey, Gouré and Jajiri where he will meet with government leaders.

The construction of the "Route de l'unité et de l'amitié canadienne" began in April of 1972. The 427 kilometre long, \$32.5 million road extends from Gouré to N'Guimi through Goudoumaria, Maine-Soroa and Diffa, servicing the South-East region of the country and linking the Niger River to the Lake Chad basin. Among other things, it facilitates marketing of products originating in this vast region in the main Nigerian centres, thus stimulating fisheries, agricultural and industrial development. This project also envisaged, through the way in which it was implemented, the formation of a Nigerian engineering team which would be qualified to undertake other road construction projects using equipment acquired with a Canadian Government loan.

As well as assisting Niger in strengthening its national unity, this project has a special importance for our two countries. It will have been, because of its challenging nature, a major step in the growing relationship between Niger and Canada, and a tangible demonstration of Canadian friendship toward Niger and Francophone Africa as a whole.