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MACLAREN TO PROMOTE CANADIAN TRADE AND INVESTMENT INTERESTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST, ASIA AND EUROPE

The Honourable Roy MacLaren, Minister for International Trade, will visit Jordan and the United Arab Emirates, January 4-9; join Prime Minister Chrétien and the Team Canada mission to India, Pakistan, Indonesia and Malaysia, January 9-20; and travel to the United Kingdom and Italy, January 21-26.

On his way to Asia, Mr. MacLaren will hold high-level talks on bilateral trade and investment matters and he will support the marketing efforts of Canadian companies with business interests in Jordan and in the United Arab Emirates.

"The Middle-East is changing rapidly. It is an important market for several Canadian companies, namely in the energy, aerospace and telecommunications sectors, and we are moving quickly to increase the presence of Canadian firms in that region."

Mr. MacLaren will then join Prime Minister Chrétien, Team Canada and the members of the Canadian business delegation on their mission to India, Pakistan, Indonesia and Malaysia.

"These countries have substantial and growing middle classes, and economic growth rates surpassing Canada's own. They are also undertaking serious trade and economic liberalizing reforms," said Mr. MacLaren. "Team Canada will show Canada's commitment to developing long-term, mutually beneficial partnerships in the region at a time when the competition for these markets is fierce."

Mr. MacLaren will then travel to the United Kingdom and Italy to further Canadian trade and investment interests, and to pursue the dialogue with senior government and business representatives on strengthening transatlantic economic relations.

In Edinburgh on January 21, he will meet members of the Scottish financial community, and in London on January 23, he will address