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CANADA CONGRATULATES PEOPLE OF HAITI AS THEY MARK FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF PRESIDENT ARISTIDE'S RETURN

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet today announced that his Parliamentary Secretary, Jesse Flis, will attend a ceremony in Haiti on October 15 marking the first anniversary of the return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. President Aristide was welcomed back to Haiti on October 15, 1994, after more than three years in exile.

"President Aristide's return marked the restoration of constitutional law and democracy to Haiti. It put an end to widespread human rights violations, set the Haitian economy back on track and paved the way for legislative elections. In short, it restored hope to the people of Haiti," said Mr. Ouellet.

The Minister added that he was especially proud of the work done in Haiti by the approximately 600 Canadian soldiers and police officers working in the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH), which is responsible for ensuring public safety during the current transitional period. "Our police officers and our soldiers have been a credit to Canada. Their dedication and professionalism have earned them the respect of the Haitian people."

Canada was the first country to restore its bilateral aid program in support of Haiti's reconstruction efforts, following the return of President Aristide. In addition to addressing basic humanitarian needs, Canadian aid supports projects to strengthen the government and civil society, such as reforming the judicial system and training the new national police force.

Canada strongly supported the efforts of the UN and the Organization of American States to bring President Aristide back to Haiti and is one of the main contributors of personnel to UNMIH.

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