

JOINT DECLARATION  
OF THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF CANADA AND CUBA

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada, the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, visited the Republic of Cuba on January 21 and 22, 1997, responding to an invitation made to him by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba, His Excellency Roberto Robaina Gonzalez. Minister Axworthy met with senior representatives of the Cuban Government, with whom he had the opportunity to exchange views on various issues of the bilateral relationship, the realities of both countries and international relations.

Both Ministers reaffirmed the high value of the longstanding and uninterrupted bilateral relationship between Canada and Cuba since its establishment in 1945. They underscored the fact that Canada-Cuba relations have always emphasized the importance of maintaining a frank and open dialogue in a spirit of mutual respect, not only on issues in which both sides agree, but as well on issues on which they differ.

The Ministers emphasized their mutual commitment and their right to conduct international relations on the basis of the defense of International Law . They reiterated the commitment to peace of their respective peoples and their common endeavours to promote social justice in an atmosphere of stability and unity, based upon the consensus of their respective citizens.

Ministers Axworthy and Robaina stated that as a result of the continuing development in bilateral relations and high-level discussions which have taken place in the past few months, Canada and Cuba have agreed to advance towards new initiatives within the framework of their bilateral relationship. These initiatives encompass a wide range of political, economic and social issues.

In this context, they had the opportunity to assess a number of areas in which both governments have agreed to work jointly. Among these areas, the following examples can be cited:

1. Cooperation in the area of the administration of justice and the judicial-legal system, including exchanges of judges and judicial training.
2. Support exchanges between the House of Commons and the National Assembly, focusing on the operations of both institutions.
3. Exchange of experiences between both countries relating to the Cuban intention to strengthen within the National Assembly of People's Power a Citizens' Complaints Commission.