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CANADA RATIFIES CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet today announced that Canada has ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Minister deposited the Canadian Instrument of Ratification with the UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, this afternoon during their meeting at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

"Canada was in the forefront of states pressing to finalize the negotiation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and in passing legislation to implement the Convention," said Mr. Ouellet. "We are proud to become one of the initial ratifiers of the Convention and urge other signatories to expedite their own ratifications so that the Convention can come into effect as soon as possible."

The Chemical Weapons Convention was opened for signature on January 13, 1993, and 159 states have become signatories so far. The Convention will enter into force 180 days after 65 signatories have deposited their instruments of ratification with the UN Secretary-General. Approximately 40 states have now ratified, including Australia, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and South Africa. Russia and the United States are still seeking their legislatures' approval of the treaty.

The Canadian Parliament approved the implementing legislation (Bill C-87, the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act) last June. The Government is continuing with its own preparations for the entry into force of the Convention, possibly in 1996.

- 30 -

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