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MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES EXTÉRIEURES

# communiqué

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THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
TO ATTEND ASEAN MEETING,  
SINGAPORE, JUNE 17-18, 1982

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The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mark MacGuigan, announced today that he will attend the annual Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Dialogue Partners in Singapore on June 17 and 18.

Dr. MacGuigan was invited to attend the meeting by Singapore's Foreign Minister, Suppiah Dhanabalan, on behalf of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers.

ASEAN is comprised of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. The meeting with Dialogue Partners (Canada, Japan, United States, European Economic Community, Australia and New Zealand) consists of a series of individual and collective meetings between the Foreign Ministers of the countries with which ASEAN has established a formal relationship or "dialogue".

Although Canada's relations with ASEAN date from 1975, they have expanded very substantially in the past few years. The ASEAN countries have achieved a remarkable degree of economic growth while constituting an element of stability which has contributed greatly to the security of Southeast Asia. In particular, ASEAN has played a key role in dealing with the serious security and humanitarian problems occasioned by the Vietnamese invasion and occupation of Cambodia in 1979. Canada has cooperated with ASEAN in a number of areas, including the search for an international solution to the Cambodia problem. Canada has accepted over 70,000 Indochinese refugees to date.

The ministerial level political consultations between Canada and the Southeast Asian nations on the occasion of the annual Foreign Ministers' Meeting reflect the political importance accorded by Canada to ASEAN. Canada also supports the economic and social development of the ASEAN countries, including joint efforts such as the ASEAN Forest Seed Centre project in Thailand. On September 25, 1981 an ASEAN-Canada Economic Agreement was signed in New York which provided the framework for broader industrial, commercial and development cooperation. Discussion of particular areas of cooperation under this Agreement have just been completed at the Third Canada-ASEAN Dialogue Session in Manila.

While it is expected that a major topic of multilateral discussion at Singapore will be the situation in Cambodia, other important international issues of mutual concern will be reviewed as well as specific matters of bilateral interest.