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YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES EXTÉRIEURES

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the honourable Mitchell Sharp, announced that Canada will be taking part during August in a youth exchange program organized by the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation.

The Agency was established in Niamey in March 1970; it has a membership of 22 partially or entirely French-speaking countries. Its aims are to implement multilateral technical co-operation programs that are distinct from, and yet complementary to, existing programs in which member countries are involved, and to assist member countries in the advancement and growth of their respective cultures.

The youth exchange program is designed to spread knowledge of the circumstances of life in the French-speaking countries of the world, and it thus serves both these aims. Some 180 young people from all member countries of the Agency will be involved. From August 1 to 28, 90 young Europeans and Canadians will be in Africa; in exchange, 94 young Africans, Madagascans, Mauritians, Haitians and Vietnamese will spend a month in Europe or Canada under similar arrangements.

The Canadian contingent under the program will consist of thirty young people, and they will be divided mainly between Senegal, Mali and the Ivory Coast, though this country will also be represented in Upper Volta, Togo, Dahomey, Niger, Cameroun and Gabon. Thirty-two participants will be coming to stay in Canada, most of them from Africa.

Canadian participants will be selected by the provincial governments associated with the Agency; Quebec has designated 20 candidates, Ontario 5, New Brunswick 3 and Manitoba two. The same provincial governments will be responsible, in conjunction with the federal government, for drawing up programs for the foreign participants' visits to their respective provinces.

The general outline of these programs is already known. The young people will spend three days in Ottawa familiarizing themselves with their surroundings, with the Canadian political structure and with life in Canada in general. They will then head for Montreal, and will be in the province of Quebec from August 5 to 18. The 32 will then be divided into three groups; half will spend a week in Ontario while the other half divides itself between Manitoba and New Brunswick for a similar period. The group will be reunited finally in Montreal on August 25 to evaluate their experiences, and will leave for Paris the next day.

General suggestions concerning programs of activities were forwarded to participating countries by the Agency, and they will include meetings with young people from various sectors of the community, seminars on our social, economic and cultural institutions, visits to industrial establishments, social centres and historic sites, and a wide variety of cultural activities.