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CANADA SUPPORTS MONTREAL'S BID FOR THE PERMANENT SECRETARIAT OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet and the Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development (Quebec) Paul Martin today announced the federal government's support for the City of Montreal's bid to host the permanent secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

In support of Montreal's bid, the federal government has pledged to provide an overall contribution of \$5 million over a five-year period to the permanent secretariat, should a decision be made to locate the organization in Montreal. Funding would be shared equally by the Federal Office of Regional Development (Quebec) and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. It is expected that the permanent secretariat would have an annual operating budget of US\$5 million. The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade will further assist by working closely with Montreal to promote the bid internationally.

Mr. Ouellet noted: "There are definite advantages to locating the secretariat in Montreal: the financial assistance being offered; Montreal's proximity to the United Nations in New York and international financial institutions in Washington, D.C.; its bilingual and highly skilled work force, as well as its quality of life and high standard of living. Furthermore, it would strengthen the critical mass in the area of the environment in Montreal and have significant benefits for Quebec's burgeoning biotechnology industry."

Mr. Ouellet added that Montreal has repeatedly demonstrated its ability to greet and accommodate visitors from around the world. The cosmopolitan nature of Montreal, as well as the warmth and vitality of its people, make the city the ideal site for the permanent secretariat. Locating the permanent secretariat in Montreal would benefit all Canadians.



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A final decision on the location of the permanent secretariat will be taken at the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention to be held in Indonesia in November 1995. Three other cities are also bidding to host the permanent secretariat: Geneva, Madrid, and Nairobi.

The Convention on Biological Diversity was one of the major achievements of the 1992 Rio de Janeiro "Earth Summit." Canadian officials played an active role in the negotiation of the Convention and Canada was the first industrialized country to ratify it.

Funding for the federal government's contribution was provided for in the February 1995 federal budget and is therefore built into the existing fiscal framework. The contribution would only be made if Montreal's bid is successful.

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