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CANADA-TUNISIA BILATERAL COMMISSION MEETINGS FEBRUARY 8-10, 1982

The Honourable Pierre De Bané, Minister of External Relations, said in Tunis yesterday that Canada's economic partners should be sensitive to Canada's export development concerns by giving favourable consideration to Canadian business interests. Mr. De Bané was in Tunisia to head the Canadian delegation at the Eighth Session of the Canada-Tunisia Bilateral Commission, which met from February 8 to 10, 1982. He told the session, which reviewed the full range of economic relations between the two countries, that one out of every four jobs in Canada was dependent on foreign markets.

"We must be quite clear", Mr. De Bané said, "we, in Canada, also face difficult times. In future, Canadian businesses should not be turned away when they offer better products at better prices."

Minister De Bané said that the fact he was being accompanied by over 20 Canadian businessmen illustrated the importance the Canadian Government attached to economic spinoffs directed to Canadian firms. He delivered this message in meetings with the Tunisian Prime Minister and other members of that government.

The External Relations Minister's message resulted in an extensive meeting with the Tunisian Minister of Finance who assured the businessmen accompanying Mr. De Bané that he would give serious consideration

to Canadian firms for services and goods when their tenders were competitive with those of other countries. In other meetings, Tunisian ministers outlined the projects and needs of their departments to the Canadian business delegation which was invited to submit tenders.

Among subjects discussed during the three-day meeting was the Canadian development programme in Tunisia and the mutual benefits that could result from the new forms of co-operation being introduced in middle-income, developing countries.

The Government of Canada's position received favourable comments from members of the Canadian business delegation at the bilateral meeting. Said Mr. Marcel Sicard, President of Tecsalt International Ltd. of Montreal, "Never have we seen such political willingness by our government to assist in finding foreign markets so as to increase employment in our own country". According to Mr. J.E. McWilliam, President of Potatoes Canada, Fredericton, N.B., "This is the first time I have been on a ministerial mission. I feel it a most effective avenue to allow Canadian businessmen to meet their counterparts and talk to government through proper channels."

Mr. De Bané is also accompanied by senior officials of the Department of External Affairs, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Canadian Export Development Corporation and Energy Mines and Resources Canada.