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CANADIAN REPORT ON FIELD EQUIPMENT PROJECT FOR
CHEMICAL WEAPONS INVESTIGATIONS
CONVEYED TO THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, today conveyed to His Excellency Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, Secretary-General of the United Nations, a research project report concerning the development of equipment for investigating allegations of the use of certain "novel" chemical warfare agents. The project report is entitled Verification: Development of A Portable Trichothecene Sensor Kit For The Detection of T-2 Mycotoxin in Human Blood Samples.

The project was undertaken by the Institut Armand-Frappier, an internationally-known biotechnology institute located near Montréal, Québec.

ANNEX

The text of the letter from the Secretary of State for External Affairs is as follows:

"Excellency,

On December 4, 1985, I had the honour of conveying to you a Handbook for the Investigation of Allegations of the Use of Chemical or Biological Weapons. I am gratified that the Handbook has been welcomed by many members of the international community.

The recent confirmed use of chemical weapons, in violation of international law, underlines the need to add to the body of knowledge which will contribute to the efficacy of a future treaty banning chemical weapons altogether. Such a treaty will, of necessity, make provision for the verification of allegations of the use of these weapons, with a view to deterring their use. In the meantime, no one has been more active than yourself, Excellency, in pursuing these matters, and I can assure you that your efforts have the full support of Canada.

Through the Verification Research Programme of the Canadian Department of External Affairs, we commissioned an internationally-known biotechnology institute -- Institut Armand-Frappier -- to develop a light-weight easily-transportable kit for use in the field as a screening assay in the detection, identification and quantification of T-2 mycotoxin in human blood samples. This research project was undertaken as a case study, to develop a better understanding of the technical problems associated with the provision of appropriate sensors to an investigating team. The speedy collection and subsequent analysis of samples pose many problems to an investigating team. These problems are compounded if the allegation relates to a "novel" agent, that is, a chemical substance not previously used for or associated with hostile purposes.

There is a need to tap the knowledge and diverse experience that is found among academics and in industry, and to provide scope for these energies to be directed to achieving the goal of meaningful and verifiable arms control and disarmament agreements. This is a learning experience, requiring time and patience from all concerned. In Canada, through the Verification Research Programme, we aim to pursue longer term goals related to arms control and disarmament.

The attached report, entitled Verification: Development of a Portable Trichothecene Sensor Kit for the Detection of T-2 Mycotoxin in Human Blood Samples, documents two years of work which, it is fair to say, still leaves many

questions unanswered, even on this very specific problem. Nevertheless, we are pleased with the work that has been done and we would like to share it with other members of the international community who are also concerned with these matters. I would note that such work can also have secondary and useful spin-off effects. For example, we were pleased to learn from Institut Armand-Frappier that the work it has done on this project has been of use in addressing certain problems associated with its work on breast cancer.

Accept, Excellency, the renewed assurance of my highest consideration."