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OFFICIAL VISIT TO ZAIRE, BURUNDI AND RWANDA
OF THE HONOURABLE PIERRE DE BANÉ,
MINISTER OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION
OCTOBER 20-27, 1981

The Honourable Mark MacGuigan, Secretary of State for External Affairs, announced today that the Honourable Pierre De Bané, Minister of Regional Economic Expansion, in his capacity as Adviser to the Secretary of State for External Affairs on Francophone Affairs, paid an official visit to Zaire, Burundi and Rwanda from October 20 to 27, 1981.

In Zaire, Mr. De Bané was the official guest of Citizen Wa Syakasige, Commissioner of State for the Economy and Industry, and had talks with several ministers of the Zairean government, including Citizen Yoka Mangono, Commissioner of State for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and Citizen Nsinga Udjuu Ongwakebi Untube First Commissioner of State (Prime Minister). Mr. De Bané gave Citizen Untube a personal message from Prime Minister Trudeau addressed to Citizen Mobutu Sese Seko, President of the Republic of Zaire, who was out of the country.

Mr. De Bané received a warm, enthusiastic welcome during his meetings with the members of the Zairean government and in many contacts with the people of Kinshasa. In addition to attending a State dinner and signing an agreement on the second phase of project SPIAF (Permanent Forest Inventory and Management Service), Mr. De Bané again encouraged his hosts on Canada's behalf for the efforts of the Zairean government to stabilize public finances and to raise the standard of living of the population. The Canadian minister also observed that the similarities between the two countries, such as the immensity of their territories, their abundance of natural resources and their participation in la Francophonie internationale offered increasing

possibilities for exchanges. Both parties agreed to strengthen and to diversify cooperation with each other, especially in the area of trade. These questions will be dealt with in greater depth at the first meeting of the Canada-Zaire Bilateral Commission, slated for Ottawa this November.

In Burundi, Mr. De Bané was the guest of Colonel Jean-Baptiste Bagaza, President of the Republic, to whom he delivered a personal message from Prime Minister Trudeau, and of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Lieutenant-Colonel Edouard Nzambimana. The purpose of this initial visit by a Canadian minister to Burundi was to initiate high-level contacts with the country's authorities and to consolidate the bases of our bilateral relations. The exchanges of views were beneficial and friendly and had to do essentially with the development of Canada-Burundi relations, the promotion of industrial, institutional and technical cooperation projects, support for the activities of non-governmental agencies, and various forms of development aid in Burundi.

In Rwanda, Mr. De Bané took part in inaugurating the buildings of the National University of Rwanda, Butare campus. This event took place before a friendly crowd of some 5,000, including General Juvénal Habyarimana, the President of the Republic, the members of his Cabinet, representatives of the Rwandian academic community, and a large number of Canadian development workers, as well as Reverend Father Georges-Henri Lévesque, who presided over the founding of the UNR in 1963 and was its first rector. During his visit, Mr. De Bané delivered to President Habyarimana a personal letter from Prime Minister Trudeau. On behalf of Canada, he signed a General Development Cooperation Agreement with the Government of the Republic of Rwanda, and had many talks with his hosts on questions of mutual interest.

In addition to underscoring the quality of the close and friendly relations that exist between Canada and these three Central African countries, Mr. De Bané's visit to Zaire, Burundi and Rwanda provided an opportunity to establish with them a foundation for growing cooperation.