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VISIT OF NEW COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY-GENERAL

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
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The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, announced today that the Commonwealth Secretary-General, His Excellency Shridath Ramphal, will be the guest of the Canadian Government on an official visit to Ottawa July 8-11. He will have a general exchange of views with the Prime Minister, ministers and officials and will discuss specific programmes and activities in the area of Commonwealth functional co-operation.

A distinguished Commonwealth Caribbean statesman, Mr. Ramphal has been appointed by Commonwealth Heads of Government as Secretary-General with effect July 1 to succeed Mr. Arnold Smith of Canada who has served two terms as Secretary-General from the establishment of the office in 1965. Mr. Ramphal was a member of the Guyana cabinet since 1965, serving as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Justice since 1972. Attached is a biographical note.

Discussions will focus on the new initiatives taken by Heads of Government at their meeting in Jamaica in May 1975, looking ahead to the Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting in Guyana this August and to the biennial Senior Officials Meeting in 1976, in Canberra. Specific programmes to be touched on during this visit are the growing Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC), the new Food Production and Rural Development Programme, the Commonwealth Youth Programme, and Secretariat matters generally.

Of particular current interest are the Commonwealth initiatives on the new economic order. Mr. Ramphal will be participating in the opening session of the Commonwealth Experts Group (McIntyre Group), which is meeting in Ottawa July 9-31.

Arriving in Ottawa from Toronto at 11:45 Tuesday, July 8, the Secretary-General will be accommodated at the Château Laurier. He leaves in the morning of Friday, July 11 for London, England, via Toronto.

MR. S.S. RAMPHAL

Commonwealth Secretary-General

Mr. Shridath Surendranath Ramphal whom Commonwealth Heads of Government have appointed to succeed Mr. Arnold Smith as Commonwealth Secretary-General has been Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice of Guyana since August 1972. He had earlier been Attorney-General and Minister of State for External Affairs and a member of the Guyana cabinet, since 1965.

Educated in Guyana and in Britain, Mr. Ramphal is an associate of King's College, London, and holds the LL.M.(London) with a mark of distinction. The Arden and Atkin Prizeman at Gray's Inn in 1952, he later attended the Harvard Law School as a Guggenheim Fellow.

He held several legal appointments in the Caribbean, including those of Solicitor-General of British Guiana 1959-61 and Assistant Attorney-General of the Federation of the West Indies 1961-62, and practised at the bar in Jamaica.

He took part in the Guyana constitutional conference in 1965 and had a major role in drafting Guyana's independence constitution. He was nominated to parliament in 1965 and appointed Attorney-General and Minister of State.

A prominent representative of his country in international assemblies, he was Vice-Chairman of Guyana's delegation to the UN General Assembly in 1966, and Chairman of the delegation in 1967 and 1968. A member of the Guyana delegation to Commonwealth Heads of Government meetings since 1966, he has led the Guyana delegation to several meetings of Commonwealth Law Ministers. He was elected Chairman of the Conference of Foreign Ministers of Non-Aligned Countries held in Georgetown, Guyana, in August 1972. Recently he was one of the main spokesmen for the developing countries in their negotiations with the European Community leading to the Lomé Convention.

He was made a Senior Counsel of Guyana in 1966 and has been a Member of the International Commission of Jurists since 1970. He is also a member of the Advisory Committee of the Centre for International Studies of New York University.

Mr. Ramphal was born in October 1928. He is married and has two daughters and two sons.