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SIGNATURE OF THE CANADA-FRANCE
SOCIAL SECURITY AGREEMENT

The Department of External Affairs and the Department of National Health and Welfare announced today that the Honourable Monique Bégin, Minister of National Health and Welfare, and Mr. Olivier Stirn, Secretary of State to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, signed an Agreement between Canada and France on social security. The signing ceremony was witnessed by Mr. Raymond Barre, Prime Minister of France, and the Right Honourable Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada.

The Agreement, which co-ordinates the main Canadian and French social security programs, will enable residents of both countries to combine credits from each country in order to qualify for social security benefits from one or both countries. Until now, people who did not meet the minimum qualifying period under the legislation of one country or both were unable to claim benefits based on the partial credits they had accumulated in either country.

Before the Canada-France Social Security Agreement can go into effect, the two governments must finalize agreements for administering it and the constitutional procedures required in either country for its coming into force must be completed.

The purpose of the Agreement is to protect Canadian and French nationals who transfer their residence to the other country. For Canada, it covers the Canada Pension Plan and the Old Age Security Program. Like other such international social security arrangements, the Agreement entered into in Ottawa is based on two major principles: reciprocity and equality of treatment for persons moving from one country to the other.

Miss Bégin is particularly pleased with the provisions in the Agreement enabling coordination of French social security programs with those of the Canadian provinces. These clauses allow provinces to negotiate arrangements with France on social security legislation coming under their jurisdiction.