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OFFICIAL VISIT TO MOROCCO BY THE MINISTER OF STATE (EXTERNAL RELATIONS)

At the invitation of the Moroccan Government, the Honourable Charles Lapointe, Minister of State (External Relations), paid an official visit to Morocco from May 4 to 6. The visit was intended to intensify economic relations between that country and Canada.

During his stay in Morocco, Mr. Lapointe had an audience with Prime Minister Maati Bouabid. He was also received by his counterpart, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Abdelhaq Tazi, with whom he examined ways and means of strengthening bilateral cooperation between the two countries and discussed some international problems of the day, namely the Middle East, the situation in Northwest Africa and the OAU.

The Minister of State also met with several other ministers of the Moroccan Government, including Mansouri Ben Ali, Minister of Transport, and Energy and Mining Minister Moussa Saadi, with whom he discussed the objectives of their forthcoming visits to Canada. The communications sector, also considered a priority in Canada-Morocco relations, was discussed with Mohand Laenser, Minister for Posts and Telecommunications.

With Finance Minister Abdellatif Jouahri, Mr. Lapointe signed an agreement to establish a line of credit for \$15 million (Cdn). Administered by the Canadian International Development Agency, this line of credit will be used in parallel with financing provided by, amongst others, the Export Development Corporation to sell Canadian goods and services to Morocco at competitive rates.

With Moulay Mustapha Belarbi Alaoui, Minister of Justice, the Canadian Minister also discussed judicial

cooperation. On this occasion, Morocco and Canada agreed in principle to initiate talks aimed at signing a prisoner exchange treaty.

During his visit to Casablanca, the economic capital of Morocco, for the 30th International Fair of Casablanca, Mr. Lapointe, hosted by Trade, Industry and Tourism Minister Azeddine Guessous, who visited Canada in October 1982, pointed out that the participation in the Fair of some twenty Canadian industrialists and businessmen, made possible in most cases through the CIDA Industrial Cooperation Program, was an indication of the importance attached by Canada to strengthening commercial exchanges with Morocco, already its fourth largest trade partner in Africa.

Minister Lapointe also announced that with the assistance and support of the Moroccan authorities, Canada would be prepared to organize in 1984 a two-week Technology Exhibition for Africa in Casablanca that would be of interest to African and Middle Eastern countries. Ministers Guessous and Lapointe also accepted the Honourary Presidency of a Morocco-Canada Friendship Association, open to all who wished to see the two countries brought closer together and directed mainly by businessmen on both sides of the Atlantic.

At the conclusion of his official visit, Mr. Lapointe thanked the Moroccan Government for its warm welcome and informed the press that the two countries had agreed in principle to hold the second session of the Canada-Morocco Bilateral Commission in Canada in the spring of 1984.