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## CANADA COMMENDS RESULTS OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE PROTECTION OF WAR VICTIMS

External Affairs Minister Perrin Beatty today called the International Conference for the Protection of War Victims an important step in what Canada hopes will result in broader compliance with existing international law. He also underlined its significance in focussing attention on the protection of civilian populations and their most vulnerable members, as well as peacekeepers and international relief workers.

"I commend the efforts of Conference participants and their resolve to work towards the universal application of humanitarian law," said Mr. Beatty. "Respect for human rights is important in stemming the escalating violence, which is responsible for so much of the suffering throughout the world."

Mr. Beatty hailed the Conference a great success, not only because the final declaration was adopted by all delegations, but also because of the positive climate of goodwill, discipline and tolerance that pervaded the meeting. Canada chaired the preparatory meeting of intergovernmental experts last April and the Drafting Committee at the Conference.

The International Conference for the Protection of War Victims took place in Geneva from August 31 to September 2. It was convened as a result of the alarming increase in the number of violations of international humanitarian law, the immeasurable suffering and the countless tragedies in ongoing conflicts around the world.

One hundred and sixty states, 16 observers and an additional 16 participants sent delegations to the Conference, including the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Commission of Jurists, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Médecins sans frontières and Amnesty International.

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