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CANADA ASSISTS NEPAL ELECTIONS

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, and the Minister for External Relations and International Development, the Honourable Monique Landry, today announced that Canada has agreed to provide \$90,000 to Nepal for the preparation of the election to be held on May 12. Canada will also send observers to oversee this country's first multi-party elections since 1958.

"Canada values its relationship with Nepal and is pleased through this assistance to reaffirm its continuing support for Nepal's democratic development," stated Mrs. McDougall.

Canada is contributing \$50,000 to the Elections Commission to provide assistance to Nepal's mass media to enable them to educate voters and publicize election information. Also, FREEDEAL, a Nepalese legal research development forum, has been provided \$40,000 to conduct a mobile voter education program at the village level concentrating on constitutional rights, and election laws and procedures. This assistance is provided by the Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) Canada Fund.

"Voter education at the village level is particularly important to the full participation of the Nepalese people in these multi-party elections," stated Madame Landry.

The Canadian observation team consists of Mr. Richard D. Balasko, the Chief Electoral Officer of Manitoba, and a representative of the Canadian High Commission in New Delhi. Along with others from many countries and

international organizations, the Canadian observers will visit polling stations and monitor the conduct of the elections.

The election for a House of Representatives was made possible when the King, in response to domestic political demands, appointed an interim government in April 1990, and later approved a constitution recognizing fundamental human rights, parliamentary government, a multi-party system, a constitutional monarchy, and an independent judiciary.

- 30 -

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