

---

## NEWS RELEASE

---

No. 102

April 28, 1993

### CANADA RECOGNIZES ERITREA AS INDEPENDENT STATE

External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall and the Minister for External Relations and International Development, Monique Vézina, congratulated the Eritrean people for their overwhelming participation in the April 23 to 25 referendum on independence and the peaceful resolution of a 30-year struggle for independence. Mrs. McDougall welcomed Eritrea to the community of newly independent states and announced that Canada will begin the process of establishing diplomatic relations.

"I commend the people of Ethiopia and Eritrea on their spirit of reconciliation and good will which has permitted this historic referendum," said Mrs. McDougall. "Canada hopes this signals a new era of peace and regional co-operation in the Horn of Africa."

Thirteen Canadians, five in the United Nations Observer Mission to Verify the Eritrean Referendum (UNOVER) and eight with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), were in Eritrea to observe the referendum. A majority vote in favour of Eritrea as a sovereign and independent country has been declared free and fair by the UN.

"The Eritrean people are showing remarkable strength and determination in rebuilding their country and forming an independent state, after 30 years of struggling through war and decades of famine and drought," said Ms. Vézina. "Canada will continue to provide food and humanitarian aid

Affaires extérieures et  
Commerce extérieur Canada

External Affairs and  
International Trade Canada

Canada

and to support multilateral organizations and NGOs working in Eritrea."

Ethiopia was given a mandate to govern Eritrea as a Province by the UN following the Second World War. After being annexed by Ethiopia in 1961, Eritrea began its struggle for independence. In 1991, a coalition of rebel movements, including the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), defeated the Ethiopian army of then-President Mengistu. The coalition, including those parties now forming the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE), adopted a charter that recognized Eritrea's right to self-determination. The Provisional Government of Eritrea (PGE) was formed to govern the de facto state of Eritrea. One of the PGE's first steps in the transition to independence was to schedule an internationally monitored referendum in 1993 in which Eritreans would be allowed to confirm democratically their desire for statehood.

- 30 -

For further information, media representatives may contact:

Media Relations Office  
External Affairs and International Trade Canada  
(613) 995-1874

or

Media Relations Office  
Canadian International Development Agency  
(819) 953-6060

Th  
an  
of  
\$5  
to  
  
BC  
se  
th  
  
BC  
th  
tr  
sa  
  
Th  
se  
pe  
cl  
  
It  
em  
  
Th  
of  
th  
  
ED  
ex  
fo  
in  
cu  
In  
  
Fo  
  
Me  
Ex  
(6