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# news release

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## CANADA ANNOUNCES ASSISTANCE PACKAGE FOR UKRAINE

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet today announced a series of new Canadian assistance initiatives designed to address pressing environmental, health and social issues in Ukraine.

"These new initiatives are providing practical, immediate assistance in areas of primary importance to the Ukrainian people. They underline Canada's special relationship with Ukraine and our commitment to help Ukraine address some of the most difficult challenges during this period of transition," said Mr. Ouellet.

One project is designed to help with the rehabilitation of the Dniepr River, the source of drinking water for 70 percent of Ukraine's population. The second will train Ukrainian physicians in the areas of maternal and infant health care. The third, an assistance package, will address emergency health needs in Ukraine, including essential supplies for pregnant women and children, and vaccines. The assistance package totals \$11.5 million.

Mr. Ouellet made the announcement in Kiev following meetings with President Leonid Kravchuk and other Ukrainian leaders.

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For further information, media representatives may contact:

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## Background

### NEW CANADIAN ASSISTANCE PROJECTS IN UKRAINE

The projects are part of Canada's ongoing technical and humanitarian assistance programs for Ukraine managed by the Bureau of Assistance for Central and Eastern Europe, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. The technical assistance program is designed to support the transition to a market-based economy, to promote democratic development and to increase Canadian trade and investment links with Ukraine. More than 60 projects have been approved to date in the priority sectors of environment, health, agriculture, private-sector development and democratic development.

The three new assistance projects, worth \$11.5 million, will consist of:

#### **Dniopr River Rehabilitation**

The International Development Research Centre will implement a three-year, \$5-million project to assist with the environmental rehabilitation of the Dniepr River. The source of drinking water for some 70 percent of Ukraine's population, the severely contaminated river is the country's most pressing environmental problem. Canada will help strengthen Ukrainian environmental management capabilities by training 250 environmental professionals, designing an information management system and assisting the Ukrainian government develop new environmental policies. In addition, a series of practical initiatives will help reduce pollution at the source. Following a study to identify the most heavily polluted sections of the river, demonstration projects with agri-industrial enterprises and wastewater treatment plants will introduce corrective action and Canadian environmental technology.

#### **Osvita Medical Project**

Under this two-year \$2.5-million project whose title translates as "enlightenment," training will be provided to Ukrainian physicians in the areas of maternal and infant health care. Managed by the University of Alberta's Faculty of Medicine in co-operation with the City of Kiev's Department of Health and three children's hospitals, 120 volunteer Canadian physicians will teach in Ukraine and some 40 promising Ukrainian physicians will complete four-month internships at medical institutions across Canada. Canadian laboratory technologists in Kiev will help modernize medical laboratory procedures and improve the quality control of medical testing. In addition, senior Ukrainian medical administrators will study medical systems and models in Canada. Building on an earlier \$900 000 initiative,

the project aims to contribute to a reduction in maternal and infant mortality and to establish a continuing medical education program in Ukraine.

#### **Humanitarian Assistance**

A \$4-million humanitarian assistance package will address emergency health needs in Ukraine. The package includes a \$3-million contribution to the Canadian Red Cross Society for the provision of essential drugs and medical supplies for pregnant women and children. In response to a United Nations appeal, \$1 million will be donated to the World Health Organization and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund for the purchase and delivery of vaccines. This package brings Canada's total humanitarian assistance to Ukraine to \$8 million.