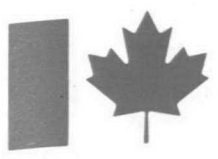


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CANADA ACCEDES TO THE UNESCO CONVENTION PROHIBITING THE ILLEGAL IMPORT OR EXPORT OF CULTURAL PROPERTY

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Don Jamieson, and the Secretary of State, the Honourable John Roberts, announced today that Canada has acceded to the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.

The signed documents will be deposited at UNESCO headquarters in Paris today and the Convention will come into force in Canada on June 28, 1978. On that date, Canada will become the 37th member state of UNESCO to accede to this Convention, adopted in 1970 by the 16th session of the UNESCO General Conference.

Canada's accession to the Convention was made possible by the entry into force of the Cultural Property Export and Import Act on September 6, 1977. This federal legislation, which was the subject of extensive consultation with all provincial governments prior to its adoption by Parliament, implements in Canada the international obligations imposed by the Convention. It contains provisions hindering the import to Canada of cultural property illegally exported from countries party to the Convention, and they in turn agree to inhibit the import of cultural property illegally exported from Canada.

Mr. Jamieson said, "There has been growing concern in recent years over illicit traffic in cultural property. Now, if a co-signing state requests the recovery of an object illegally imported to this country, the Attorney General will institute the necessary legal proceedings. Canadian courts will then determine what compensation is to be paid to a bona fide Canadian purchaser by the reciprocating state when the object is to be returned to that state".

Mr. Roberts stated that, "The Canadian Government believes that the transfer of cultural property from one country to another is no longer a matter of indifference to the Community of nations. By implementing the Cultural Property Export and Import Act, the Government of Canada has assumed its responsibility to act as guardian of the heritage of all Canadians and by acceding to the UNESCO Convention, has taken an important step in recognizing that this responsibility extends to the cultural heritage of all mankind".