



news release

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OUELLET ANNOUNCES DELEGATION TO CANADA-MEXICO JOINT MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE

A delegation of ministers led by Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet will travel to Mexico City for wide-ranging consultations March 1 with Mexican counterparts in the annual Canada-Mexico Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC). The JMC meetings began in 1971 and have been held annually in recent years, alternating between the two countries.

"These meetings provide a means of regular, in-depth contact between ministers of both countries across a broad spectrum of mutual interests," said Mr. Ouellet.

"As our relationship with Mexico has grown -- be it on trade, joint hemispheric interests, agricultural or environmental co-operation, human rights or the strengthening of democracy -- these sessions have become increasingly important to both Canada and Mexico. With the NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement] having just taken effect, the meeting is a timely opportunity to review and encourage our growing links."

The wide range of interests for discussion is reflected in the Canadian delegation attending the JMC. In addition to Mr. Ouellet, the delegation will consist of: Sheila Copps, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment; Ralph Goodale, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food; Roy MacLaren, Minister for International Trade; and Doug Young, Minister of Transport.

Mr. Ouellet noted that among the topics expected to be discussed in Mexico City are bilateral issues and regional trade, transport relations, environmental co-operation, the export of natural resources and related technology, human rights including the Chiapas situation, and Mexico's economic and political reforms. He added that the meeting will assist Canada in pursuing its goal of expanding exports to Mexico under the NAFTA.

During the JMC, ministers will greet a mission of new Canadian exporters on their first visit to Mexico. The JMC also coincides with an exhibition at the embassy of Canadian food products currently being sold in Mexico.

Mr. Ouellet also will celebrate 50 years of Canadian-Mexican diplomatic relations by unveiling a plaque in the embassy dedicated to Dr. Hugh Keenleyside, the first Canadian ambassador to Mexico.

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