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CANADIAN CANDIDATE FOR WORLD COURT

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, said today that she welcomed the candidacy of Judge Jules Deschênes in the upcoming elections to the World Court. Judge Deschênes is a former Chief Justice of the Superior Court of Quebec and a former Judge of the Court of Appeal of Quebec. Judge Deschênes was selected by the Canadian National Group of the Permanent Court of Arbitration, which is responsible for making Canadian nominations to the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

"I was very pleased that the National Group selected Judge Deschênes. He is a first-rate candidate," said Mrs. McDougall. "Judge Deschênes' experience in legal matters at home and abroad provides him with just the right sort of qualifications to take a seat on the bench of the Court."

The World Court is based in the Hague and comprises 15 judges, each elected for a nine-year term. It is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations (UN) and has the role of deciding, on the basis of international legal rules, disputes submitted to it by states. Elections are held concurrently in the UN General Assembly and the Security Council.

After consulting widely with organizations and individuals across Canada, including the law faculties of all Canadian universities, the Supreme Court, the Courts of Appeal and other national and provincial legal bodies, the National Group selected Judge Deschênes to run in the elections, which will take place in the autumn of 1993. If successful, Judge Deschênes would be the first Canadian representative on the International Court of Justice (ICJ) since Judge John Read in the mid-1950s.

Judge Deschênes has held a range of international positions including: Committee President of the World Association of Judges for the Expansion of the Role of the ICJ (1977-82); President of the First World Conference on the Independence of Justice (1983); President of the International Labour Organization Commission of Enquiry on Romania (1989-91); member of the UN Sub-Commission for the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (1984-87); and advisor to the UN Centre for Social Development and Human Affairs in Vienna (1983-84). In addition, Judge Deschênes has served as the Enquiry Commissioner on War Criminals in Canada (1985-87) and is a member of the Extraordinary Challenge Tribunal under the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. He has just completed a two-year term as President of the Royal Society of Canada.

Judge Deschênes will participate in next week's debate in the UN General Assembly Legal Committee in New York and will present Canada's position on the establishment of an International Criminal Court. Canada has been at the forefront of moves to develop such a court that would, among other things, have jurisdiction over war crimes in the former Yugoslavia. In her recent speech to the UN General Assembly, Mrs. McDougall called for the International Law Commission to draft a statute for the establishment of an International Criminal Court.

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