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OFFICIAL VISIT OF THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS TO THE IVORY COAST AND TO KENYA

The Minister for External Relations, the Honourable Monique Vézina, announced today that she will be visiting the Ivory Coast January 8-11 and Kenya January 12-17, 1985.

Canada has maintained excellent relations with the Ivory Coast since its independence. Ministerial visits in both directions over the years and the visit to Canada of President Houphouët-Boigny in June 1983 have contributed to reinforcing and intensifying our bilateral relations. Canadian development assistance to the Ivory Coast has surpassed \$85 million over the past twenty years.

While in the Ivory Coast, Mrs. Vézina will co-chair the second meeting of the Bilateral Commission. At this gathering, general relations between the two countries will be examined and a new General Agreement on Development Assistance will be signed. In addition, this visit of the Minister for External Relations will facilitate the consolidation of cooperation between Canada and the Ivory Coast and permit discussions on major international political issues with senior government officials.

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During her stay in Abidjan, Mrs. Vézina will inaugurate the Polyclinique Sainte-Anne-Marie which was constructed by a Canadian company at a cost of \$50 million.

Proceeding from the Ivory Coast, Mrs. Vézina will pay an official visit to Kenya. Since its independence in 1963, Kenya has been an important partner for Canada in Africa. The Canadian programme of development cooperation has grown substantially in recent years. Disbursements are expected to reach \$25 million in 1984-85.

The visit to Kenya will be an occasion to study the development cooperation programme, to discuss the challenge facing Kenyan society and how best Canada can assist, and to review major international issues with government leaders. Mrs. Vézina will visit as well a number of grass-roots development projects in central Kenya.