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CONCLUSION OF THE EIGHTH SESSION OF THE CANADA-TUNISIA BILATERAL COMMISSION MEETING

The Honourable Pierre De Bané, Minister of External Relations, has announced that Canada will earmark \$126 million in aid and credit programmes to Tunisia during the coming year.

Mr. De Bané's announcement came at the conclusion of the eighth Canada-Tunisia Bilateral Commission meeting at Tunis this week. The Government of Canada assistance will be directed in the field of development, human, technical, economic and institutional co-operation.

Mr. De Bané expressed the hope that the trade relations between the two countries will enhance their respective economies. The External Relations Minister also urged the Tunisian government to take advantage of the quality and competitiveness of Canadian services and goods. Mr. De Bané was accompanied at the session by a delegation of more than 20 Canadian businessmen.

Tunisia has traditionally been a major recipient of Canadian aid in Africa. "I am confident that Canada's assistance will result in direct economic benefits to Canadian business interests, as well as to the Tunisian people", Mr. De Bané said.

Mr. De Bané pointed out that the new assistance to Tunisia will allow students of that country to take advantage of professional training in Canada through a cost-shared bursary programme.

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Mr. De Bané also suggested that Canadian companies establish correspondents in Tunisia in order to participate fully in the economic development of the country.

For his part, Tunisian Minister of Finance Mansour Moalla lauded Canada's efforts as pioneers in helping his country during their economic revival period. "We are most grateful for the assistance we received from your country over the years. We look forward to Canada exploring all avenues of mutual interest and concern," Mr. Moalla told the Canadian delegation.

The next Canada-Tunisia Bilateral Commission meeting will be held in Ottawa next year.