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ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING
BANGKOK, JUNE 27-28, 1983

The Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs, announced today that he will attend the annual Post-Ministerial Meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers with Dialogue Partners in Bangkok on June 27 and 28.

Mr. MacEachen was invited to attend the meeting by Thailand's Foreign Minister, Air Vice Marshal Siddhi, the current Chairman of the ASEAN Standing Committee, on behalf of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers. The Secretary of State for External Affairs has regularly attended these annual meetings since 1980.

ASEAN, which came into existence as a regional organization in 1967, comprises Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. The Association has established formal relations or "Dialogues" with six partners (Australia, Canada, the European Community, Japan, New Zealand and the United States). During the annual meeting, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers will meet both individually and collectively with their counterparts representing the Dialogue Partners.

The importance of ASEAN to Canada was recently underlined by the visit to the region of the Prime Minister in January. The ASEAN countries with their high rates of economic growth offer opportunities for increased trade and economic cooperation with Canada. At the same time they are making a significant contribution to regional peace and stability. ASEAN has played a key role in the search for a peaceful settlement to the problem of Cambodia

since 1979 when Vietnamese troops invaded and occupied the country. Canada has supported ASEAN initiatives on Cambodia and provided assistance for the relief and resettlement of Indochina refugees arriving in ASEAN countries.

While the problem of Vietnam's continuing occupation of Cambodia is expected to be a major topic of discussion at the Bangkok meetings, other important international and regional issues, both political and economic, will be discussed. The ministerial level political discussions will also provide an opportunity for Canada and ASEAN to review their economic cooperation as a follow-up to the recent inaugural meeting among officials of the Canada-ASEAN Joint Cooperation Committee which Mr. MacEachen opened in Ottawa on April 26.