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OFFICIAL VISIT TO ITALY AND TALKS AT THE HOLY SEE,
OF SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, MARK MACGUIGAN,
MAY 6 TO 8, 1981

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Dr. Mark MacGuigan, announced today that following his participation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) ministerial meeting to be held in Rome on May 4 and 5, he will pay an official visit to Italy on May 6 and 7, at the invitation of the Foreign Affairs Minister of the Italian Republic, Emilio Colombo.

During the bilateral talks in Italy following the Venice Economic Summit in June 1980, Prime Minister Trudeau and the President of the Council, Francesco Cossiga, undertook to promote political and economic consultations between Italy and Canada. Dr. MacGuigan's visit will give visible expression to this common desire for consultation.

The two ministers will study ways of enhancing the already close relations between the two countries. The solidarity between the two peoples became particularly evident last fall, when thousands of Canadians spontaneously contributed to the relief effort for Southern Italy's earthquake victims. Italy is the country of origin of Canada's third largest cultural community, and is Canada's seventh biggest trade partner. Last December a convention on double taxation came into effect; it is expected that this will give a new boost to trade between the two countries.

The two ministers will conduct an exchange of views on the main international issues of common interest. They will discuss the preparations for the Economic Summit to be hosted by Canada this summer, and in which Italy will participate. As partners in NATO, they will review the status of East-West relations. In addition, they will examine ways of fostering the dialogue between the industrialized and the developing countries.

Dr. MacGuigan will be received by the President of the Republic, H. E. Alessandro Pertini, and will have talks with Vincenzo Scotti, Minister responsible for the reconstruction programme in the earthquake zone. He will visit the affected region on May 7 to see the progress of the work, and to consult the responsible officers on site.

The External Affairs Minister will also take advantage of his stay in Rome to meet the Director General of the United Nations' Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and discuss Canada's interest in the world food programmes and agricultural development. Canada has been a member of FAO since the organization was set up at the Quebec Conference in 1945.

Dr. MacGuigan will devote the day of May 8 to meetings at the Holy See, where he will be received in a private audience with the Holy Father. He will also be received by the Secretary of State, Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, and will have an exchange of views on the international situation with Monsignor Achille Silvestrini, Secretary of the Council for the Public Affairs of the Church. He will have talks with Cardinal Bernardin Gantin, President of the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace, on human rights as well as on development and social justice issues.