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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

On the occasion of International Women's Day, March 8, 1991, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, reaffirmed Canada's strong commitment to work toward full equality for women in Canada and around the world.

"Canada will continue to play a leadership role bilaterally and in multilateral organizations, by initiating and supporting efforts aimed at advancing the status of women," Mr. Clark said.

To this end, the Canadian government works to ensure that women are involved as participants and beneficiaries in all of its bilateral official development assistance projects. Multilaterally, Canada pursues many activities aimed at full integration of women into social, economic, political and cultural life.

Canada is serving its third consecutive term on the UN Commission on the Status of Women, which monitors the situation of women globally and is the central UN body for advocating gender equality. "Canada has played an extremely active role at the Commission's 35th session in Vienna. At this session, Canadian priorities included the elimination of violence against women, the promotion of female literacy and the creation and strengthening of national mechanisms to advance the status of women," Mr. Clark stated. One of Canada's major initiatives at this year's session, he said, was the development of a proposal for an optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) that would address the issue of violence against women in all its forms.

Canada has played a similarly active role in promoting the advancement of women within the Commonwealth. In October 1990, Canada hosted the third Meeting of Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs. Delegations from 47 countries examined a broad range of issues, with a special emphasis on economic equality for women.

Also in October 1990, Canada joined the Inter-American Commission for Women (CIM) of the Organization of American States. "Membership in CIM will enable Canada to play a greater role in working for equality of women within the Americas," commented Mr. Clark.

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