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## NEWS RELEASE

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### CANADA HOSTS NINTH CANADA-MEXICO JOINT MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE MEETING

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade, the Honourable Michael Wilson, and several of their Cabinet colleagues will hold discussions with their Mexican counterparts on the growing Canada-Mexico relationship during the Ninth Canada-Mexico Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC) Meeting, to be held in Ottawa February 15. Several Canadian ministers will accompany the visiting Mexican ministers to other Canadian cities on February 16.

This meeting comes at an important juncture in the relationship between Canada and Mexico when trade and other ties are increasing significantly. As the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is to go into force on January 1, 1994, the year that also marks the 50th anniversary of Canada-Mexico diplomatic relations, the meeting provides a timely opportunity to take stock of and foster the developing partnership between the two countries.

The JMC is a forum for consultations between ministers on matters of interest to both countries in the political, economic, commercial and other fields. The last JMC Meeting was held in Mexico City in November 1991 and was attended by Ministers McDougall, Wilson and the Minister of Agriculture of that time, the Honourable Bill McKnight, now Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

Canadian ministers participating at this year's meeting will include, in addition to Mrs. McDougall, Mr. Wilson and Mr. McKnight, the Honourable Perrin Beatty, Minister of Communications; the Honourable John Crosbie, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans; the Honourable Charles Mayer, Minister of Agriculture; the Honourable Frank Oberle, Minister of Forestry; and, the Honourable Marcel Danis, Minister of Labour.

On the first day, the ministers will identify areas of common interest and concern, and determine priorities for future co-operation in bilateral and multilateral spheres. Memoranda of understanding will be signed in the areas of housing, mining, distance learning and cultural co-operation.

The Right Honourable Prime Minister Brian Mulroney will host a luncheon for the Mexican and Canadian ministers.

"The relationship between Canada and Mexico is a privileged and diverse one, and I am very pleased to welcome Foreign Minister Solana and his colleagues to Canada for this Ninth JMC Meeting," said Mrs. McDougall. "The JMC provides a unique forum for discussion of ways to manage our increasingly diverse relationship. This meeting will help us to cement our partnership in ways that will serve both of us well in the years ahead."

Mr. Wilson noted that the meeting will provide an important opportunity to review the process of the NAFTA implementation. "It will also allow us to consider ways to strengthen an already healthy bilateral trading relationship and build on existing and potential opportunities throughout the North American marketplace."

On February 16, individual programs are being arranged for a number of the ministers and their Mexican counterparts in various parts of the country. These programs will allow the ministers to focus on specific aspects of the bilateral relationship, as well as witness, first-hand, many of the concrete activities that give substance to the Canada-Mexico partnership.

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