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McDOUGALL COMMENTS ON THE BOSNIAN TALKS AND ANNOUNCES MEASURES TO SUPPORT VICTIMS OF THE CONFLICT IN THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall today welcomed the apparent progress accomplished at the peace talks on Bosnia-Hercegovina held in Geneva. She called on all Yugoslav parties and, in particular, the leaders of the Bosnian Serb community, to accept unconditionally the elements of the constitutional arrangements for that republic proposed by international mediators Lord Owen and Cyrus Vance .

"The Geneva talks provide the best hope for peace," Mrs. McDougall said. "I urge all concerned, and notably the Serbian leadership, to bring this tragedy to an end by accepting without delay the proposals for a new constitutional arrangement for Bosnia-Hercegovina."

Mrs. McDougall will be in Paris January 13, where she will discuss the situation in Yugoslavia, as well as Iraq, with other foreign ministers gathered for the signing of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The Minister also noted that External Affairs and International Trade Canada, in its continuing efforts to support the victims of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, is funding the secondment of nine Canadian Red Cross Society delegates to international Red Cross organizations. The nine, plus an additional five Canadian delegates who will take up new assignments in the coming weeks, are assisting in medical and relief activities for victims in the region.

The Canadians are working with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Croatia, Serbia, Hungary and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, providing expertise to regions identified by the organizations.

As part of Canada's campaign to bring those responsible for war crimes in the former Yugoslavia to justice, Mrs. McDougall announced the establishment of an Information Co-ordinator, to collect information from members of the public on violations of humanitarian law. The information will be included in Canada's reports to the United Nations Secretary-General and will be made available to the UN Commission of Experts, which is studying humanitarian law violations in the region. Canada has been actively supporting the establishment of an ad hoc tribunal that would hear cases connected with the conflict.

Those wishing to provide substantiated and detailed information on violations of humanitarian law can obtain a submission form by writing to:

Information Co-ordinator
160 Elgin St.
Main Plaza
P.O. Box 70090
Ottawa, Ontario
K2P 2M3

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For further information, media representatives may contact:

Media Relations Office
External Affairs and International Trade Canada
(613) 995-1874

For a list of Canadians seconded to international organizations, contact:

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(613) 739-2263