

# News Release

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## DECLARATION BETWEEN CANADA AND THE RIO GROUP

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet today announced that Canada and the Rio Group have issued a joint declaration establishing high-level political consultations. The declaration is a follow-up to a proposal Mr. Ouellet put forward in September during his meeting in New York with the Rio Group.

"The declaration is a testimony to the growing partnership between Canada and the member countries of the Rio Group," said Mr. Ouellet. "It also points to a stronger future in the hemisphere – one that Canada and the Rio Group can help create through the consultation process formalized in this declaration."

The 14-member Rio Group is the highest political consultative forum for Latin America. "A formal consultation process with the Rio Group is an important policy priority for Canada and comes after years of successful informal discussion and increased ties throughout the region," the Minister added.

Mr. Ouellet also expressed his particular appreciation for the co-ordinating role of Foreign Minister Galo Leoro of Ecuador in reaching an agreement among the Rio Group member countries on the text of the declaration. Ecuador currently holds the rotating presidency of the Rio Group.

The joint declaration – the text of which follows – was issued as a separate press release earlier today in Quito, Ecuador, in association with a meeting of Rio Group foreign ministers.

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For further information, media representatives may contact:

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## Backgrounder

# DECLARATION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE RIO GROUP AND THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA ON HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS

The Governments of the Argentine Republic, the Republic of Bolivia, the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Republic of Chile, the Republic of Colombia, the Republic of Ecuador, the United Mexican States, the Republic of Panama, the Republic of Paraguay, the Republic of Peru, the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, the Republic of Venezuela, the Republic of Nicaragua representing the countries of Central America, and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago representing the countries of the Caribbean, the said member countries of the Rio Group (hereinafter referred to as "the member countries of the Rio Group") and the Government of Canada (hereinafter referred to as "Canada"):

Inspired by the friendship between the member countries of the Rio Group and Canada as well as by their desire to develop and broaden cooperation generally;

Recognizing that closer cooperation is of mutual benefit to both the member countries of the Rio Group and to Canada;

Desiring to complement the bilateral relations between the individual member countries of the Rio Group and Canada;

Conscious of the need for a permanent exchange of information through recognized and regular bilateral contacts between the member countries of the Rio Group and Canada;

Reaffirming their intention to develop a dialogue regarding bilateral matters and other regional and international themes of mutual interest that reflect the vigour of the relations between the member countries of the Rio Group and Canada;

Confirming the usefulness of direct and informal consultations between the Foreign Ministers of the member countries of the Rio Group and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada, and the usefulness of such consultations that take place on the margins of various international fora and organizations, particularly, the United Nations and the Organization of American States;

## Resolve:

1. To establish a mechanism for consultations between the Foreign Ministers of those member countries that in any given year constitute the Rio Group Troïka, on the one part, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada on the other. These consultations, open to all member countries of the Rio Group, will be held each year on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly. As considered convenient, these consultations could also take place in the country hosting the Secretariat Pro Tempore of the Rio Group or in another country as determined by the two Parties to this Declaration.
2. The date, duration and agenda for these consultations will be jointly determined through the Secretariat Pro Tempore and the Government of Canada.
3. The discussions and the results of these consultations will not be formalized as official statements nor joint declarations, but will be reflected in an internal document fixing a joint plan of action with the purpose of establishing a workplan and follow-up. Notwithstanding the above, any Party may inform the media of the outcome of these discussions.
4. The consultations will be supplemented by additional meetings at the officials' level, involving the Rio Group Troïka Ambassadors and any member countries referred to in this mechanism, and senior officials in Ottawa as required and to provide information on the results of Rio Group Summits.