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81/82

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CANADA AND EGYPT SIGN NUCLEAR COOPERATION AGREEMENT

The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, the Honourable Mark Lalonde and the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mark MacGuigan, announced today the signing of an Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt for Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy. Mr. Lalonde signed the Agreement on behalf of Canada and Mr. Maher Abaza, the Egyptian Minister of Electricity and Energy, who is beginning a week long visit to Canada, signed on behalf of Egypt.

The Agreement allows the initiation of cooperation between the two countries for the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It envisages cooperation in such areas as the possible supply of CANDU reactors to Egypt, the supply of uranium to be used as fuel, the implementation of joint nuclear research projects and the application of nuclear energy to fields such as agriculture, industry and medicine. The Agreement will also facilitate exchanges of experts, technicians and specialists related to the development of nuclear energy as well as the provision of technical training.

Canada has developed a highly efficient, safe and dependable nuclear fuel cycle. CANDU reactors consistently lead all power reactors in the world in terms of performance. For its part, Egypt is now working on plans to develop a nuclear energy programme for its own industrial, economic and social development. No specific commercial or other projects have at this time been identified by Canada and Egypt but with the signing of this Agreement, both Governments expect that an exploration of possible projects will begin.

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Canada and Egypt strongly advocate the pursuit of peace, and Canada will continue to support Egypt's role in the Middle East peace process. Both countries are committed to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. In order to demonstrate that commitment, both countries have ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and have placed all their nuclear facilities, current and future, under international safeguards applied by the International Atomic Energy Agency. The Agreement recognizes this important mutual commitment and carries a provision for the continuing application of safeguards in the event that the Agency is no longer able to carry out its safeguarding functions. The Agreement also contains provisions for the retransfer of nuclear items, the reprocessing of spent fuel and the application of adequate levels of physical protection to nuclear facilities and nuclear fuel.

Each Government views this Agreement both as a further element strengthening the bilateral relationship and as an expression of the mutual interest in economic and industrial development. These economic and industrial advances will be assisted by the greater availability of energy resources developed through cooperation between Canada and Egypt.

Following his stay in Ottawa, Mr. Abaza will visit Canadian nuclear facilities in Toronto and the Bruce nuclear installation near Kincardine, Ontario. He will then travel to Alberta and British Columbia to view the Syncrude plant at Fort McMurray and a hydro electric installation in B.C.

Copies of the Nuclear Agreement are available from the External Affairs Press Office.