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# news release

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## CANADA ANNOUNCES PROGRAM OF ACTION ON LAND MINES

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet and Minister of National Defence David Collenette today outlined a Canadian program of action to address the devastation caused around the world by the indiscriminate use of land mines. Canada will seek to extend existing land mine measures and introduce new controls.

"The indiscriminate use of land mines continues to inflict untold misery throughout much of the developing world. I urge all countries to join in the effort to protect innocent civilians and vital economic and social infrastructures from the scourge of these weapons," said Mr. Ouellet.

"Canada and the Canadian Forces have an outstanding international reputation in working to help countries deal with the devastation caused by land mines," said Mr. Collenette. "The Canadian Forces are currently involved in de-mining operations in Cambodia and the former Yugoslavia, where a Canadian peacekeeper was killed just recently by a land mine."

At the 1993 UN General Assembly, Canada co-sponsored a resolution calling for a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel land mines. Canada will now seek an international agreement on the transfer of land mines as a more comprehensive and longer-term measure.

On June 15, Canada ratified the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which deals with land mines. The Convention will be reviewed at an international conference in 1995 at which Canada plans to play a major role.

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## Backgrounder

### **CANADIAN ACTION REGARDING LAND MINES**

- It is estimated that there are currently between 85 and 100 million land mines in place around the world.
- The Canadian Forces are currently involved in de-mining operations in Cambodia, where a Canadian serves as Deputy Head of the UN De-Mining Program, and in the former Yugoslavia, where Canadian peacekeepers have been killed by land mines. Canada is also researching technological solutions to the problem.
- At the 1993 UN General Assembly, Canada co-sponsored a resolution calling for a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel land mines. Canada does not export land mines.
- Canada has ratified the United Nations convention which restricts the use of land mines and certain other conventional weapons. Officially titled the Convention on Prohibition or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, the instrument is commonly referred to as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW).

#### **Canadian Program of Action**

- Canada is now proposing an international agreement on the transfer of land mines.
- Canada introduced a resolution at the June 1994 General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) which urged all members to sign and ratify the CCW. The resolution, adopted by consensus, commits the OAS to examining the issue of land mines at the regional level.
- A conference will be held in 1995 to review the CCW. Canada will be working with like-minded countries to develop proposals aimed at strengthening and expanding its terms. Among the measures Canada will be promoting are:
  - extending the Convention to deal with internal conflicts,
  - requiring that all mines be detectable, and
  - establishing an effective verification and enforcement regime.