



# communiqué

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## RESUMPTION OF CANADIAN BILATERAL HUMANITARIAN AND ECONOMIC AID TO GUATEMALA

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark and the Honourable Monique Landry, Minister for External Relations, announced today the government's intention to resume a bilateral aid program with Guatemala. In making the announcement, Mr. Clark indicated that he would be sending a mission of officials to Guatemala in early 1988 to begin discussions with the Guatemalan Government to identify the most effective and appropriate use of Canadian aid, and to ensure that it will reach those most in need.

Mr. Clark stated that the decision to resume bilateral programming was a direct response to the urgent economic and social needs of the poor who make up the majority of Guatemalans, and that it reflects Canada's global commitment to directing Canadian assistance to the most disadvantaged groups.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs indicated that resuming a bilateral program at this time was a concrete measure of Canada's support for the Central American peace process, and that it reflected our conviction that peace and democracy cannot be achieved without a commitment to improving the economic and social well-being of the general population of Central America.

In 1981, Canada suspended planning for new bilateral aid projects in Guatemala because the difficult internal situation did not permit the effective delivery of a bilateral program. The security of aid workers and concerns about systematic human rights abuses by successive military governments precluded the resumption of a program. Disbursement of funds from previously committed projects was completed and funding has continued through NGO and other aid channels.

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Canada continues to be concerned about respect for human rights in Guatemala. The Canadian Government shares the views of many observers, including some Guatemalan human rights groups, that human rights violations have decreased significantly since President Cerezo assumed office.

The announcement to resume a bilateral aid program with Guatemala comes on the eve of Mr. Clark's visit to Central America. He will visit Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica from November 21 to 28, 1987.