

News Release

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CANADA SIGNS UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION
AGAINST ILLICIT TRAFFIC IN NARCOTIC DRUGS AND
PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, announced that Canada signed the United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances at a ceremony held today in Vienna, Austria. The Convention was negotiated over the past three weeks during a United Nations Conference attended by 104 countries.

In accordance with the concerns addressed by the National Drug Strategy announced in May, 1987, the Canadian delegation took a leading role in negotiating this international treaty against drug trafficking.

The new Convention greatly enhances world-wide cooperation by making international criminal offences of drug trafficking, money laundering and the illicit cultivation of narcotic plants. It also establishes procedures to facilitate extradition of drug offenders and the confiscation of proceeds derived from drug offences. Mutual legal assistance and other forms of cooperation among police forces, customs agencies and health officials are strengthened.

The Canadian delegation to the Conference was led by the Department of External Affairs, and also included representatives from the RCMP and the Departments of Justice, Health and Welfare, National Revenue and the Solicitor General's office.

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Secretary of State
for
External Affairs

Secrétaire d'État
aux
Affaires extérieures

Canada

(Press Release on National Drug Strategy,
issued May 25, 1987)

TORONTO -- A \$210 million, 5-year action plan
by the federal government to curb drug abuse was launched
today by Health and Welfare Minister Jake Epp.

Building on last October's Speech from the Throne,
the federal plan will bring new resources to Canadian
initiatives in public education, treatment and
rehabilitation, law enforcement and control and research
carried out at the international, national, provincial and
community levels.

"With these initiatives Canada will continue to play
its part in the international effort against drug abuse led
by the United Nations and the World Health Organization,"
Mr. Epp said.

In a statement following his briefing of
representatives of the provincial and territorial addiction
agencies and Toronto-area community groups, the Minister
called for greater cooperation and information exchange among
all who aim to reduce drug abuse and the illegal supply of
drugs.

"Our major challenge is that, while the vast
majority of Canadians are aware of and concerned about drug
abuse, too few understand or know how to deal with it,"
Mr. Epp said. "Too few Canadians know where to turn for
accurate information, assistance and support for overcoming
this problem."

The Minister stated that the first priority is
"to communicate that action begins with awareness -- of
changing patterns in drug abuse and supply; of all the
sources of advice, expertise, and assistance; and ultimately,
of the need to take individual action."

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Mr. Epp spoke about the expertise and commitment of both the professionals and the volunteers working in this field. "To succeed, all those who are a part of the solution must work in partnership so that all efforts dovetail into a comprehensive, practical program," added Mr. Epp.

Describing drug abuse as a problem that "cuts across all segments of society", the Minister announced a wide range of initiatives including:

- a public education campaign being developed with provinces,
- support for both prevention and treatment initiatives at the community level,
- increased federal funding for drug and alcohol treatment and rehabilitation,
- development of training programs and resources for professionals and volunteers,
- greater availability of information through such means as telephone information lines,
- new legislation to replace the Narcotics Control Act and the Food and Drug Act, and
- a Task Force to consider the creation of a national focus to ensure that expertise in the drug abuse field is shared for the benefit of all Canadians.

"Details of other initiatives will be announced over the coming week in centres across Canada by my Cabinet colleagues," Mr. Epp said.

In addition to the Minister of National Health and Welfare who is the lead Minister in the federal drug abuse effort, the week-long series of announcements also involves the participation of:

- Solicitor-General James Kelleher
(Ottawa, May 26)
- Minister of State (Youth) Jean Charest
(Montreal, May 26)
- Minister of National Revenue (Customs) Elmer MacKay
(Halifax, May 27)
- Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark
(Ottawa, May 28)
- Minister of Justice Ray Hnatyshyn
(Ottawa, May 29)

"We all agree the key to our Action on Drug Abuse is the effective coordination of Canada's resources to respond to this serious problem," Mr. Epp said.

Ref.: Susan Carter
Interdepartmental Secretariat on Drug Abuse
(613) 957-7780

Krystyna Pottier
Health and Welfare Canada
(613) 957-2985