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McDOUGALL ACCEPTS
LESTER B. PEARSON NOBEL PEACE PRIZE MEDAL

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, today accepted the Lester B. Pearson Nobel Peace Prize Medal and Citation on behalf of External Affairs and International Trade Canada, from Mr. Pearson's son, Geoffrey, in a ceremony in Ottawa.

"It is a great honour to receive the Nobel Peace Prize Medal from the family of Lester B. Pearson," said Mrs. McDougall. "Its presence in the Department will serve as a touchstone for all Canadians and members of the world community who have come to associate Canada with those high ideals of international conduct first championed by Mr. Pearson."

The Medal, the Citation and a bronze casting of an artist's maquette of the statue of Lester Pearson on Parliament Hill will be on permanent display in the Main Lobby of the Department.

Lester Pearson received the Nobel Peace Prize on December 11, 1957, in Oslo, Norway. He was awarded the Prize for his proposal to use a peacekeeping force to resolve the Suez crisis in 1956 and his efforts to ensure its acceptance and successful implementation.

"Mr. Pearson masterminded the creation of the United Nations' first successful peacekeeping operation," said Mrs. McDougall. "That model took hold and the successes of 1956 have been replicated in some 40 UN peacekeeping operations since then."

The Nobel Prize for Peace is one of five prizes awarded annually from a fund established by the will of Alfred Bernhard Nobel, a Swedish industrialist. (A sixth prize, for economic science, was set up by the Bank of Sweden in 1968.) The Prize for Peace is presented in Oslo to a recipient chosen by the Norwegian Nobel Committee, which is appointed by the Norwegian Parliament. The recipient is given a gold medal, a citation and a sum of money (which varies according to the income earned from the fund).

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For further information, media representatives may contact:
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BACKGROUNDER

Lester B. Pearson

Lester Bowles 'Mike' Pearson was born in Newtonbrook, Ontario, on April 23, 1897. He graduated with a B.A. from the University of Toronto in 1919, and in 1923 received his M.A. from Oxford University. Mr. Pearson joined the Department of External Affairs in 1928 and, after a posting in London, served in Washington, first as Minister-Counsellor, then as Ambassador to the United States.

The United Nations Charter was signed in San Francisco on June 26, 1945. Mr. Pearson was involved in the diplomacy which led to the creation of the United Nations Organization, first at the preliminary conference at Dumbarton Oaks in 1944, and then as a senior Canadian advisor to the founding conference. Throughout his career, Mr. Pearson strongly supported the UN in its efforts to secure global peace, and he was very active in the General Assembly and in a number of its organizations.

In September 1946, Mr. Pearson returned to Ottawa as Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs and two years later he became Secretary of State for External Affairs. He won a by-election in 1948 and represented Algoma East until his retirement from politics. From 1963 to 1968 he served as Prime Minister; his legacy includes a new flag for Canada, measures to improve the conditions and opportunities for Francophones in government, universal medicare, the Canada Pension Plan and the unification of the armed forces. He died in Ottawa on December 27, 1972.

The Nobel Prize for Peace was first awarded on December 10, 1901, the fifth anniversary of Nobel's death. The Prize is given only when the Committee deems there has been a significant contribution to world peace by an individual or an institution. When Lester B. Pearson won the award in 1957, there had not been a winner for two years.

In 1988, the Nobel Peace Prize was presented to the United Nations to mark 40 years of service as an international peacekeeper. Canada has participated in virtually every UN peacekeeping initiative and in four non-UN missions as well. The UN blue beret has been worn by more service personnel from Canada (more than 80 000) than from any other nation.