



news release

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QUELLET ANNOUNCES POSITIVE RESULTS OF CANADA-MEXICO JOINT MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE MEETING

At the close of the annual Canada-Mexico Joint Ministerial Committee meeting, Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet today reported that the meeting provided the opportunity to reconfirm the new vigour that Canada accords to its relationship with Mexico. Furthermore, the Joint Ministerial Committee meeting has given the Canadian delegation a forum for consultations on a number of key issues important to both countries.

Mexican Foreign Secretary Manuel Tello and Mr. Ouellet reviewed foreign policy issues, including the strengthening of democracy and the protection of human rights in Latin America. Haiti and Cuba were accorded particular attention. The two foreign ministers agreed to reinforce co-operation between Canada and Mexico at both the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) and to support the candidacy of Colombian President Cesar Gaviria as Secretary General of the OAS. The ministers agreed to co-operate closely on disarmament issues, including the ending of all nuclear tests and achieving an indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

During the Joint Ministerial Committee meeting, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment Sheila Copps pledged enhanced consultations and co-operation between Canada and Mexico on priority environmental matters: reducing air pollution and toxic waste, and protecting forests, water, wildlife and endangered species. Minister for International Trade Roy MacLaren reviewed progress on the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and during his visit provided support to a number of current business opportunities for Canadian companies in Mexico. Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food Ralph Goodale reviewed efforts to strengthen agricultural co-operation and to increase Canadian agricultural exports to Mexico. Minister of Transport Douglas Young signed three Memoranda of Understanding on transportation: "Access by Tractor Trucks and Semi-Trailers to Their Territories," "Recognition and Validity of Licencias Federal de Conductor" and "Commercial Drivers Licences and Technical Co-operation in Transportation."

Foreign Secretary Tello and Mr. Ouellet held extensive discussions on the question of Chiapas, and Mr. Ouellet met separately with Mr. Jorge Madrazo, President of the Mexican National Human Rights Commission. Mr. Madrazo has been invited to visit Canada. Secretary Tello outlined the actions undertaken by the Mexican government to date, and Mr. Ouellet indicated the desire of Canadians for a peaceful solution that addresses the fundamental underlying causes of the conflict. Secretary Tello confirmed the determination of Mexican authorities to reach a negotiated solution with the indigenous peoples of Chiapas and to thoroughly investigate all allegations of human rights abuses.

At the Joint Ministerial Committee meeting, the ministers also concluded that:

- a strong and concerted effort is under way to enhance Canadian exports to Mexico; and
- cultural and academic activities and exchanges between the two countries should be given a high priority.

Mr. Ouellet also announced that the next meeting of the Canada-Mexico Joint Ministerial Committee will be held in Canada in 1995.

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