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Media Advisory

Afro-Canadians Join Afro-Latino Leaders to Seek Canadian Engagement on Race Issues in the Americas

Ottawa, February 27, 2006 – Afro-Latino leaders including Costa Rican Vice Presidential Candidate Epsy Campbell and former Governor the State of Rio de Janeiro, Benedita da Silva, will join Afro-Canadian leaders Senator Don Oliver and former MP and Secretary of State of Multiculturalism Jean Augustine on Thursday, March 2, 2006 in Ottawa to discuss how Canada can become engaged in supporting economic, social and political development in black communities in the Americas.

According to the Inter-American Development Bank, Afro-Latinos constitute a third of the population of Latin America, yet they account for half of the region's poor. "To have any impact on reducing poverty in the Americas requires recognizing the link between race and poverty and adopting targeted programmes to provide training, capacity building, legal reforms, education, health services, and infrastructure" says Judith Morrison, Executive Director of the Washington DC-based Inter-Agency Coalition on Race in the Americas, which is co-sponsoring the meeting with the Canadian Foundation for the Americas.

While Canada is committed to poverty reduction in Latin America, it has yet to identify its role in assisting the region's most marginalized population as have agencies ranging from the British Development Agency to the World Bank and the Pan-American Health Organization.

The meeting, organized by FOCAL, Canada's leading hemispheric think-tank and the Inter-Agency Coalition on Race in the Americas, will include presentations from officials at the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the US government Inter-American Foundation and the Pan-American Health Organization.

The meeting will be held in Ottawa at the International Development Research Centre, 250 Albert St, 14th floor from 11h00 to 16h00.

NB: The meeting will be web cast live on Thursday March 2nd from 11h00 to 16h00 at <http://www.canafro.theigloo.org>

For more information, visit www.focal.ca or contact:

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