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Parliamentary Secretary Obhrai to Represent Canada at a Conference on Haiti

(No. 74 - February 22, 2011 - 2:40 p.m. ET) Deepak Obhrai, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, will travel to Brussels on February 23, 2011, to represent Canada at a conference on Haiti titled "Haiti, One Year After the Earthquake: Perspectives on the International Humanitarian Response and the Role of Governance in Rebuilding Haiti."

"This event on Haiti is an opportunity for Canada and the European Union to discuss best practices and lessons learned in humanitarian responses to natural disasters," said Parliamentary Secretary Obhrai. "These discussions will inform our future actions in Haiti and allow us to be better prepared to respond to the needs of those affected by disaster."

Parliamentary Secretary Obhrai will focus on governance and address the coordination of international humanitarian aid and rebuilding one year later. As the Honourable Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Foreign Affairs, has stated, the international community alone cannot rebuild Haiti. Political stability can only be achieved by the Haitians themselves democratically electing an efficient, honest and responsible government to lead the people through the next critical stage of recovery and reconstruction.

Parliamentary Secretary Obhrai will deliver the keynote address to an audience of Canadian, European and Haitian government officials, academics and representatives of international institutions, think tanks, NGOs and civil society as well as members of the Haitian diaspora.

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"The international community must continue to help strengthen governance in Haiti by supporting the democratic process and reinforcing key institutions. Political stability and the successful transition to democracy are critical for Haiti," said Parliamentary Secretary Obhrai. "Canada continues to make this a priority for the future of Haiti."

The conference is co-hosted by Canada, the European Union and Egmont - Royal Institute for International Relations, in association with Haiti's Mission to the EU.

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