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LLOYD AXWORTHY TO HEAD OAS ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION TO PERU

The Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), José Miguel Insulza, today appointed former Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy to head the OAS Electoral Observation Mission that will monitor the April 9 general elections in Peru.

After meeting with Axworthy this afternoon at OAS headquarters, Insulza said the longtime Canadian diplomat's international stature, experience, and knowledge of both Peru and the OAS made him a logical choice to lead the observation mission.

"As the people of Peru will remember, Dr. Axworthy played a pivotal role in helping that country begin a national dialogue, following the controversial elections of 2000. I am confident that he will bring the same leadership and good judgment to this task," Insulza said. At its June 2000 meeting in Windsor, Canada, the OAS General Assembly designated Axworthy and the OAS Secretary General to lead a special mission to Peru. That visit led to the establishment of a national dialogue to explore ways to strengthen democracy in that country.

During his visit today, Axworthy met with Secretary General Insulza and Peru's Permanent Representative to the OAS, Ambassador Luis Fernando de la Flor. Axworthy will travel to Lima next week, where he will meet with government and electoral authorities and sign an agreement establishing the parameters of the observation mission. An initial agreement establishing privileges and immunities for the observers was signed at the OAS last month by Insulza and Peruvian Foreign Minister Oscar Maúrtua de Romaña.

"The government of Peru has reiterated its commitment to guarantee an electoral process that is transparent, fair and legitimate. For Peruvian citizens, the presence of the OAS reinforces confidence in the democratic process," Axworthy said.

Dr. Axworthy is currently President of the University of Winnipeg. He served as Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1995 to 2000, crowning a 27-year political career. Axworthy became internationally known for his advocacy of the human security concept and for his success in securing the adoption of the Ottawa Treaty banning antipersonnel landmines, an achievement that led to his nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997.
