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INCREASED NUMBER OF JUDGES WILL ASSIST IN IMPROVING ACCESS TO JUSTICE SYSTEM

OTTAWA, June 20, 2008 – The Honourable Rob Nicholson, P.C., Q.C., M.P. for Niagara Falls, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, welcomed the June 18th Royal Assent of the *Judges Act* (Bill C-31), which will increase the number of judges in provincial superior courts across the country.

“It is no secret that the current number of judges in various provincial superior courts has not kept pace with the increased demands on the justice system,” said Minister Nicholson. “With the passage of this Bill, the Government of Canada is helping address backlogs and delays that affect access to justice.”

C-31 amends the *Judges Act* to authorize the appointment of 20 new judges for provincial and territorial superior trial courts. The legislation is responding to a clear and pressing need to address backlogs and delays within the superior trial courts. It will also ensure that First Nations’ specific claims can move forward at the proposed independent tribunal.

The new Specific Claims Tribunal established under Bill C-30, the *Specific Claims Tribunal Act*, will help resolve First Nations’ specific claims. This legislation received Royal Assent on June 18, 2008. The independent tribunal will be made up of the equivalent of six full-time sitting superior court judges.

Allocation of the remaining new judges will be made following consultations with the Chief Justices of the affected superior courts as well as the provincial and territorial governments.

For an online version of the *Judges Act* (Bill C-31) visit www.parl.gc.ca.

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Ref.:

Darren Eke
Press Secretary
Office of the Minister of Justice
613-992-4621

Media Relations
Department of Justice
613-957-4207

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