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Canada

Updated

Martin sees no conflict in short-term UN post

Canadian Press

UNITED NATIONS — Paul Martin will perform a warmup lap as a United Nations co-chairman while winding down the days to his all-but-certain appointment as prime minister, he announced Friday.

The Liberal leadership favourite was named co-chairman of a United Nations commission devoted to economic development in the Third World.

Friday's appointment might help offset Martin's one-dimensional popular image as a deficit-slaying numbers cruncher.

"I have always been interested in problems of Third World development," Martin noted in an interview from New York.

"I believe the alleviation of poverty is the single most important problem we face as a human society."

Martin often points out that when he was finance minister, he was instrumental in lobbying other countries to relieve Third World debt.

Also, his appointment to the Commission on the Private Sector and Development could help deflect criticism he's too cozy with the United States.

Martin has also said military action must sometimes be taken without the UN.

Meanwhile, he said he sees no conflict with heading up a UN commission while running to lead Canada.

The UN appointment is no more time-consuming than the job of cabinet minister, he said in reference to his lone remaining leadership opponent.

"The other candidate (Heritage Minister Sheila Copps) is a minister. She has responsibilities," Martin said.

The job won't require much travel because most work can be done by telephone,



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