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**For Immediate Release**

**International scientists exchange latest results in SARS research**

*Process of finding effective tests, prevention and controls is speeded up*

**Banff, Alberta – September 3, 2003** – Leading international researchers will convene in Banff tomorrow to exchange the latest knowledge about SARS and work together to determine future collaborative research topics. The goal is to speed up the process of discovering effective tests and control measures in the prevention of SARS.

Scientists from Canada, the UK, USA, Taiwan and Australia are participating in this event, which is being jointly supported and coordinated by MITACS (Mathematics of Information Technology and Complex Systems) and PIMS (the Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences). The event will be held at the Banff International Research Station in Banff, Alberta on the site of the Banff Centre from September 5-6.

This interdisciplinary approach involves the collaboration of mathematicians, statisticians, epidemiologists and virologists. Mathematical models are integrated with statistical analysis of real data and are built on a solid epidemiological foundation. The results from this conference will be interpreted and translated into public health policy recommendations.

“The collaborative approach of this workshop, led by mathematicians, will offer unique insights into research on the epidemiology of SARS. Working together with Health Canada will enable this research to have a real effect on health policy guideline recommendations,” said Dr. Arvind Gupta, Scientific Director of MITACS.

The SARS workshop is organized by Dr. Fred Brauer at University of British Columbia, Dr. Ping Yan at Health Canada and Dr. Jianhong Wu, project leader of the MITACS project *Transmission Dynamics and Spatial Spread of Infectious Diseases: Modelling, Prediction and Control* and a Canada Research Chairholder in the Department of Mathematics at York University. Scientific experts participating in the workshop include Dr. John Glasser from the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA; Dr. Steven Riley of Imperial College, London UK; Dr. Ying-Hen. Hsieh of the National Chung Hsing University, Taiwan; Dr. Niels Becker from The Australian National University; and Dr. Ping Yan of Health Canada. These researchers will be joined by many respected scientists from across Canada.

“The opportunity to compare the experiences of the scientists involved in this workshop will progress our understanding of SARS at a faster pace. Comparing HIV AIDS research to SARS data, for example, will no doubt lead us in valuable new directions,” said Dr. Jianhong Wu.

### **About MITACS**

Established in 1999, the Mathematics of Information Technology and Complex Systems networks (MITACS) is one of 19 federally funded Canadian Networks of Centres of Excellence. The 250 scientists in the network are working on 32 research projects in collaboration with more than 80 organizations. Over 400 students and other trainees work directly with the scientists and private sector firms.

MITACS works with organizations to identify their problems, find scientists capable of tackling those problems, and provide significant funds towards the research that leads to innovative solutions. Out of these collaborations, new technologies emerge that transform the way we live, career opportunities arise that keep trained personnel in Canada, and lasting partnerships between academic and industrial researchers create avenues for development in both communities. By planting healthy seeds in many areas of Canadian life, MITACS contributes in countless ways to the country's social and economic growth.

### **About PIMS**

The Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences (PIMS) was created in 1996 by scientists in Alberta and British Columbia. This collaborative international venture of seven universities in Western Canada, as well as the University of Washington, involves over 300 scientists from these institutions, with additional funding from NSERC and the governments of Alberta and British Columbia. The Banff International Research Station for Mathematical Innovation and Discovery (BIRS) is a collaboration of PIMS and MSRI, the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute in Berkeley, California. BIRS is operated in coordination with MITACS. BIRS provides an environment for enhanced opportunities for creative interaction and the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and methods within the mathematical sciences, related scientific fields and industry. BIRS is located on the site of the world-renowned Banff Centre in Banff, Alberta.