

from all geographical areas and from countries in all stages of economic development. In this way, the proposals for action to be laid before the Conference are expected to reflect a degree of consensus which will speed their general acceptance.

Winning the support of the developing nations is a major concern, as many of them are fearful of new controls which might limit their rate of industrialization. But one of the aims of the Conference is precisely to help the developing nations to progress without stumbling into the environmental problems now afflicting the industrialized nations and, by pollution of the seas and the atmosphere, threatening the world environment as a whole.

Canada is contributing to the removal of this misunderstanding by giving assistance to some of the developing countries in their preparations for the Conference. Moreover, regional meetings held in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East have provided forums for discussion of the various subjects on the Conference agenda of particular concern to each region. An example is that of the African nations, which located along some of the main tanker routes of the world are particularly vulnerable to marine-based oil pollution.

Put very broadly, the aims of the Stockholm Conference are to reach agreement on the kind of environment we want and to formulate a general program for its achievement. Even though many elements of such a program may require further discussion and refinement in more specialized meetings before they can be translated into action, the development of valid proposals to put before the Conference is a problem which must be approached from a number of angles.

On the scientific side, we have to assess how much more information we need, how we can organize the international effort to collect it and how it can best be put to use. For example, the effects of different pollutants upon the various living organisms of the sea, and their consequent effects upon man, require further study; so too does the manner in which pollutants are distributed by the global ocean-currents. The oceans have always been one of the chief disposal areas for man's wastes. This is a necessary function and the fundamental problem is to find the correct balance, or in other words to determine what kinds of waste, and how much, the seas can absorb and dispose of without damage to the marine environment.

Another approach is to determine what matters are suitable for action at the international level, and what must be dealt

with primarily by nations acting individually. Marine and atmospheric pollution seem to fall into the first group, so reclamation and the management of human settlements for environmental quality into the second. To deal with these and other problems, the Conference preparations have proceeded in two ways.

First, Mr. Strong has requested and is receiving very large amounts of factual information from governments and various consultants in the form of reports, assessments and scientific papers, of which Canada alone has submitted 54. One result of these efforts will be a *Report on the Global Environment*, which will be distributed before the Conference opens and will serve as a bench-mark indicator where Earth now stands in matters of environmental quality.

#### Five working groups

Secondly, the preparatory committee has set up five intergovernmental Working Groups to develop action proposals and guidelines in five different areas: marine pollution, soil preservation and reclamation, monitoring and surveillance (of atmospheric and marine pollutants), conservation of areas of national or historical importance, and a Declaration on the Human Environment. Although it would not have the force of law, this declaration would be a statement of accepted principles and objectives. Canada has been active in all of these Groups. Indeed the Intergovernmental Working Group on Marine Pollution held its second session in Ottawa in November. The Group will report on these questions: guiding principles on the preservation of the marine environment and the prevention of marine pollution; a comprehensive plan to preserve the marine environment; and a Convention to regulate ocean dumping, which it is thought may be ready to be opened for signing at Stockholm. Other conventions which have been discussed by the Intergovernmental Working Group on Conservation, dealing with measures to protect species of plants and animals of danger of extinction and the preservation of important natural and historic sites, may also be ready for signing at Stockholm.

The organization of the Canadian work on the Conference preparations follows general parallels the international intergovernmental committee upon which the government departments interested in all 20 of them — are represented as the principal co-ordinating agency. It establishes task forces or working groups up to the present time have been chief

Basic problem is finding correct balance