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# news release

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## CANADA AND FRANCE AGREE ON STEPS TO SETTLE MARITIME BOUNDARY DISPUTE

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the Honourable Tom Siddon announced today that Canada and France have agreed on a programme which should lead to the settlement of the dispute over the maritime boundary off the south coast of Newfoundland and St. Pierre and Miquelon and provide fishing quotas for France for 1988-1991 while the boundary is being determined.

Canada and France have agreed that the dispute be submitted for binding settlement by an international judicial tribunal, subject to the negotiation of a treaty before the end of 1987 on the composition of the tribunal and its terms of reference. The negotiations will start before March 15, 1987.

Canada and France have also undertaken to negotiate, before the end of 1987, interim fishing arrangements for French vessels in Canadian waters for the years 1988-1991, pending determination of the maritime boundary. These fisheries arrangements will be contingent on signature by the Parties of the treaty on terms of reference for international judicial settlement of the boundary dispute.

The two countries have agreed to a meeting of Canadian and French scientists as soon as possible, to undertake a joint assessment of the state of the cod stock off the south coast of Newfoundland (NAFO Division 3Ps) now being overfished by French vessels, and joint projections of what will happen to the stock if the current overfishing continues. The two Ministers noted that solid scientific information is the first step toward resolving the overfishing problem.

The rights of vessels from Metropolitan France to fish in the Gulf of St. Lawrence expired in May 1986 under the provisions of the 1972 Canada/France Fisheries Treaty. However, vessels registered in the French islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon off the south coast of Newfoundland continue to have fishing rights in the Gulf as part of that treaty.

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