

With respect to the second item, seaworthiness of the installations and vessels involved, the prior assessment of any proposed drilling programme should take into account not only the many factors related to the way in which the well is to be drilled, but also the suitability and capabilities of the equipment to be used as regards the sea and other conditions that can be expected during the course of operations. Many highly technical factors are involved here, under such general headings as stability, buoyance and moorings, that are vital to the operation as a whole. These have a fundamental bearing with respect to effective and uninterrupted well control and the safety of personnel on board.

The Canadian delegation is in agreement with others that scientific research should be encouraged in every way possible. However, we would wonder if it would be possible to draw a distinct line in all cases between an activity ostensibly carried out for scientific purposes and one of a similar nature deemed to be a commercial enterprise. Moreover, it would be little consolation after the activity has given rise to pollution to recall that it was carried out as scientific research. Prevention is the keystone of pollution abatement, and this is especially true with respect to the vulnerable multi-resource ocean environment. It would seem logical to apply similar operational requirements to scientific research programmes having a potential for causing pollution as would be applied to commercial research programmes with a similar potential. At the national level, for example, a drilling programme would not be allowed to proceed on Canada's continental margin, whether it be with scientific or commercial intent, without assurance that adequate pollution control equipment and procedures were to be utilized.

We have in many parts of the world now reached a stage on land where in the relatively near future, according to some eminent scientists, we may actually reach the irreversible stage as regards the pollution of our environment. Let us not make the same mistake with respect to the even more vulnerable environment of our seas and oceans.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the extreme complexity of the subject with which we are dealing. We are at this stage having difficulty reaching agreement even as regards the type of specific matters we should be discussing. We are even encountering difficulty to some extent in reaching agreement as regards the objectives of the regime we are trying to design. Yet this is only a beginning; we have still to become concerned with the type of treaty or convention necessary to establish the regime and what should be included within it; we have still to become concerned with all the complexities inherent in drafting regulations in accordance with this treaty or convention; and, we have yet to really become concerned about the extent and types of discretionary powers with which we wish to endow the international authority that will have to design the administrative policies and procedures by which these regulations are implemented. This is an awesome task, and I believe it bears repeating that we must soon be prepared to come to grips with the specific items involved.