

## UN discrimination pact ratified

Canada has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The 30 articles of the convention cover measures to eliminate discrimination against women in various fields including political and public life, the right to nationality, education, employment, health and marriage and the family. Rights of rural women and elimination of stereotypes are given special attention.

In making the announcement, Secretary of State Gerald Regan, Secretary of State for External Affairs Mark MacGuigan and the minister responsible for the Status of Women Judy Erola reiterated the commitment of the federal government to amend the discriminatory provisions of the Indian Act, within the context of the proposed Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms after consultation with Indians and other interested parties. The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development will study ways of amending the Act in consultation with interested parties.

## Petro-Canada budget increased

The federal government has approved a \$1.6-billion budget for Petro-Canada in 1982, an increase over the \$900 million spent in 1981.

The government will provide \$425 million directly to the national oil company.

The rest will be covered by funds generated from within Petro-Canada, about \$1.1 billion or 69 per cent of total spending, and the remainder will be achieved through borrowing.

The budget sets aside \$550 million for spending on offshore exploration and development activities.

Among other things, the company is active in the Beaufort Sea and off the coasts of Labrador, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, where it has a substantial stake in the Hibernia oilfield.

A further \$450 million will be directed towards conventional oil exploration and development in the Northwest Territories and in the Western provinces.

The rest of the budget will be divided among a range of activities, including research and development and oil-sands, natural gas and coal projects.

The Cabinet order, recognizing that the company needs financial flexibility in

planning for subsequent years, also provides authority for Petro-Canada or its subsidiaries to enter future commitments of up to \$1 billion for conventional exploration and production and \$4.5 billion for non-conventional and special projects. The ceiling for such commitments last year was \$1 billion.

The budget does not cover possible new takeovers by the federal Crown corporation. The company acquired Petrofina Canada Incorporated last February and 85 per cent of the \$1.4-billion price is being covered by a new tax on consumption, called the Canadian ownership charge.

## Diplomatic relations with Maldives

Canada has established diplomatic relations with the Republic of Maldives.

Robert W. Clark, currently Canada's High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, will be accredited as ambassador to the Republic of Maldives, with residence in Colombo. He has been high commissioner in Sri Lanka since December 1979.

The establishment of formal diplomatic relations with the Maldives, an Indian Ocean state, reflects the importance Canada attaches to this region and the growing role of the Maldives as a centre attracting Canadian tourists.

## Norway joins SARSAT project

Norway has joined the satellite-aided search and rescue system (SARSAT) project in which Canada is a participant.

The objective of the project is to use satellites in low polar orbits to assist search and rescue teams to locate rapidly any aircraft or ships in distress. The concept envisages a satellite to detect the distress signals and to relay the information to a network of ground stations whose task is to process the signals so as to locate the endangered vehicle, and report its findings to a rescue co-ordination centre.

Norway is to establish a receiving station in Tromso, in the northern part of the country, to cover areas in the Arctic and North Atlantic used by the Norwegian fishing fleet.

Canada, the United States and France agreed in 1979 to co-operate in the SARSAT program. In 1982, Canadian and French electronic equipment will be put aboard U.S. weather satellites for an

initial 15-month orbital demonstration project.

The Soviet Union is participating in a joint evaluation of the system, and will also launch a similar system (COSPAS) that is compatible with SARSAT. Discussions are also underway with Japan and Britain, which have expressed interest in taking part.

Experiments by the Canadian Department of Communications' research centre have shown that such a system could locate aircraft crashes or marine mishaps with an accuracy of ten to 20 kilometres, in a matter of minutes. The satellites orbiting over the poles every 12 hours would monitor emergency frequencies used by commercial and military ships and aircraft. Ground stations would receive the transmitted information by way of satellite and flash it to rescue co-ordination centres.

## Consulates upgraded in U.S.

Six Canadian consulates in the United States have been designated consulates general.

In announcing the change in status of the consulates, Secretary of State for External Affairs Mark MacGuigan said the Canadian government was recognizing the increasing responsibilities they have in contributing to effective representation of Canadian interest in the U.S.

Consulates in Buffalo, Cleveland, Dallas, Detroit, Minneapolis and Philadelphia have been designated consulates general.

Posts in the United States were originally established to provide consular services and facilitate trade relations between the two countries. Over time the consulates have expanded their tasks to include disseminating information about Canada to the U.S. public and issuing visas to immigrants or travellers from third countries.

Dr. MacGuigan said that the effective and positive management of relations with the United States has always been a central goal of Canadian foreign policy. He added that it is necessary for Canada to be able to communicate its policies as clearly and directly as possible to interested U.S. parties.

The other Canadian consular posts in the United States are already established as consulates general: they are Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York, San Francisco and Seattle.