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MEETING OF ARCTIC NATIONS OPENS IN FINLAND

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, described as "timely and important" the meeting on the Arctic environment taking place from September 20-26, 1989 in Rovaniemi, Finland.

The Rovaniemi meeting involves eight Arctic nations, including Canada. This is the first time that Arctic countries have come together to focus on circumpolar environmental problems. The other countries participating are Finland, USSR, USA, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland.

"It is time to act in a coordinated and concerted manner", Mr. Clark stated. "As Arctic nations we have a special duty, because it is our citizens, lands and waters, resources and wildlife which are most directly threatened by the deterioration of the northern environment. We will be held accountable for our stewardship of the North."

In its opening statement to the meeting, the Canadian delegation noted that recent studies show that damage is increasing to northern areas previously considered untouched by humans. The delegation is stressing the human dimension of the Arctic environment: the effects of environmental degradation - particularly toxic accumulation in the Arctic food chain - on health and the northern way of life.

The Canadian Delegation, includes representatives from several government departments and is headed by J. Alan Beesley, Special Advisor on Environmental Affairs to The Secretary of State of State for External Affairs.

- 30 -

Secretary of State
for
External Affairs

Secrétaire d'État
aux
Affaires extérieures

Canada