

ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

There were several significant developments during 1979 in the still-expanding area of international environmental law. Bilaterally, Canada and the United States continued their efforts to build upon existing well-established principles of environmental management in border regions. Canada and Denmark agreed on contingency measures to be taken in the event of pollution incidents on the East Coast of Canada. Multilaterally, the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) drafted a convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution to be signed in November 1979; the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) continued its efforts to develop the legal principles contained in the 1972 Stockholm Declaration of Principles on the Human Environment; and the Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO) pursued its work in preparing a draft convention on Liability and Compensation in Connection with the Carriage of Noxious and Hazardous Substances by Sea; the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and UNEP proceeded with the drafting of guidelines for States on the international aspects of weather modification.

Marine pollution and air pollution were the subjects for bilateral, as well as multilateral, emphasis. On the West Coast, Canadian and USA officials initialled a draft Agreement for a Co-operative Vessel Traffic Management System for the Juan de Fuca Region. The world-wide trend towards larger oil tankers, and the increasing possibility of their presence in coastal waters, greatly strengthened the need for bilateral co-operative arrangements in the region of the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The draft agreement, which is to be submitted to governments for approval, is designed to make the existing voluntary vessel traffic management/traffic separation scheme mandatory for all ships navigating the Strait of Juan de Fuca, thus promoting the safety of navigation and protection of the environment in the region.

On the East Coast, Canadian and Danish officials signed, in July 1979, a Canada/Denmark Marine Pollution Contingency Plan designed to update and formalize the 1977 Interim Canada/Denmark Contingency Plan. The new Plan provides for the development of appropriate preparedness measures as a contingency against pollution incidents resulting from offshore hydrocarbon exploration or extraction under Canadian or Danish jurisdiction.