

## International Law

Canadian experts and officials have continued to participate in the environmental activities of the OECD and the NATO Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society (CCMS). In the OECD, Canada — with the United States — initiated an important study on the effects of fluorocarbons on the ozone layer. In NATO-CCMS, one of Canada's important contributions for 1975 was the launching of a pilot project on food and health.

As part of Canada's expanding relations with Europe, discussions have proceeded with the EEC on co-operation and exchanges of information on scientific and environmental matters. In November 1975, letters on environmental co-operation were exchanged in Brussels between Canada's Ambassador and the Vice-President of the Commission, establishing a formal framework for co-operation in that area.

In the sphere of international law, the Department, through its Legal Bureau, has two principal and complementary functions. It provides a general advisory service to the Government and the public on international law, including information and advice on treaties to which Canada is a party or in which there is a Canadian interest. Of increasing importance in current relations among states are the numerous international meetings held to codify existing law or formulate new law in areas previously not subject to it. The Bureau acts as the operational arm of the Government in the development and maintenance of international law. The following were among the areas in which the Department sought during 1975 to advance Canadian interests through the enhancement of the role of international law.

### Law of the sea

Because of the number of important interests Canada has at stake in regard to fisheries, off-shore minerals and protection of the marine environment, the Government attaches high priority to the successful and speedy conclusion of the Third United Nations Law of the Sea Conference. Canada has been working energetically towards approval by the international community of a comprehensive treaty that will regulate the use of the oceans in a way that will be equitable, workable and responsive to current needs and realities.

At its first substantive session, in Caracas in 1974, the conference established the basis for a new legal regime for the oceans: the 200-mile "economic zone" for the area of national jurisdiction and the "common heritage of mankind" applicable to the international seabed area. At its second substantive session, in Geneva from March 17 to May 9, 1975, the conference concerned itself with giving substance to these innovative ideas. Because of the large number of countries participating (135) and the many complex and interrelated subjects on its agenda, the conference was not able to complete work on the long-awaited treaty, although considerable progress was made.

Much of this progress was achieved not so much in the three plenary committees of the conference as in the many informal working groups that sprang up. For example, when the Second Committee was unable to come to grips with some of the most difficult jurisdictional