

no international agreements and 170 are without any sort of co-operative institutional arrangements. Clearly, given the potential for conflicts and disputes over water allocation and use, mechanisms to manage transboundary waters are needed. Such mechanisms could include, subject to the approval of the parties concerned, the creation of joint bodies and the development of regionally-based international agreements to manage shared water resources. Canada and the United States have both benefitted from a long history of co-operation in this area through negotiation of the Boundary Waters Treaty and the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, and through the creation of the International Joint Commission and other bilateral mechanisms. Along similar lines, countries of the U.N. Economic Commission for Europe are presently negotiating a framework convention for the protection and use of transboundary waters and international lakes. This convention will encourage the creation of joint bodies for water management purposes.

The second example, which I will refer to only briefly, concerns management of national water resources. It is primarily the responsibility of national or sub-national governments, and of local water bodies, to ensure that water programs are delivered on the ground. We believe that the capacities of national water management agencies should be strengthened, and that local water agencies, based on the watershed unit, be established and or strengthened to improve water management capacity. There is little doubt that many of the past failures in water management have occurred due to a lack of integration of decision-making for all potential users of a basin. Canada's experience with local water bodies indicates that they can facilitate such integration and ensure community consultation. We could similarly think, without too much difficulty, of other mechanisms needed to address global water issues and national and local water problems.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to express my delegation's support to the initiative of the Nordic countries regarding the development of operational guidelines for water resources management in developing countries. I would also like to inform you of Canada's intention to present, in advance of the Dublin Conference, a position paper to stimulate concentration on issues regarded as critical.

Mr. Chairman, the importance of adequate supplies of freshwater to the social and economic development of all nations is well recognised, as is the importance of improving the management of this vital and threatened resource. It should be our objective at this PrepCom to ensure that the Dublin Conference is afforded appropriate direction and support on the road to UNCED.