

ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

Canada has continued in 1980 to be active in the development of international environmental law both at the multilateral and bilateral levels.

Multilateral

A joint initiative by Canada and Sweden at the UNEP Governing Council's eighth session in April, 1980, led to a decision by that body to convene, prior to its tenth session which will be held in 1982, a meeting of senior government officials experts in environmental law. This meeting will be held in conjunction with activities relating to the tenth anniversary of the Stockholm Declaration and will contribute to the preparation of a work programme for UNEP for the next decade. The dates for the Senior Level Meeting will be decided upon by the Governing Council at its ninth session in 1981.

The task assigned to the Senior Level Meeting is to identify subject areas where increased global and regional cooperation may encourage and enhance progress in the field of international environmental law, in particular with regard to the interests of developing countries, and to recommend a programme, including global, regional and national efforts, toward this end. The Governing Council requested that consultations in preparation for the Senior Level Meeting take place among the Executive Director of UNEP, Governments and regional governmental and non-governmental bodies. In order to facilitate this process, Canada has invited representatives from the European Economic Community, the Executive Director of UNEP, fifteen countries representative of the various geographical regions, and the Chairman of the UNEP Working Group of Experts on Environmental Law to Ottawa for informal consultations from November 5 to 7, 1980.

Also within UNEP, the Working Group of Experts on Environmental Law, which was established in 1977, met in February, 1980, and again in June/July, continuing their study of the legal aspects of offshore mining and drilling carried out within the limits of national jurisdiction. The Group completed its study of part two, safety measures to prevent pollution from offshore mining and drilling, and part three, contingency planning, in its four-part programme. It will discuss part four, liability and compensation, at a further meeting in October.