

Conference to also examine the problem of conservation of fish stocks straddling the 200-mile limit of exclusive fishing or economic zones. The drafting committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Beesley, will continue the Conference task of putting this complicated negotiating text into treaty form.

The draft negotiating text already represents a major step forward in restructuring the principles of the Law of the Sea and in developing new concepts of ocean resource management. For example, the 200-mile fishing zone, which is now an established principle of international law, has already contributed to the remarkable resurgence of the fisheries industry in the Atlantic Provinces. The 12-mile territorial sea, which Canada proclaimed in 1970, is now also an accepted legal norm. The Conference has also recognized coastal state sovereign rights over the continental margin which would give Canada an extensive shelf beyond the 200-mile fishing zone on the East Coast. Of particular importance to Canada as well, the Conference has produced a comprehensive system of legal rules for the protection of the marine environment, including an enhanced role for the coastal states in the prevention and control of vessel source pollution, as well as special provisions for the protection of fragile ecosystems in ice-covered waters.

Facing on three oceans, with a broad continental shelf, a major fishing industry, an important land-based mineral industry, and an ecologically vulnerable Arctic, Canada has a vital interest in the outcome of the Law of the Sea Conference.