

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, together with the Honourable Jean Marchand, Minister of the Environment, the Honourable Ronald Basford, Minister of Justice and the Honourable Roméo LeBlanc, Minister of State (Fisheries), will head the Canadian Delegation to the fourth session of the United Nations Law of the Sea Conference which is to take place in New York from March 15 to May 7, 1976. Mr. J. Alan Beesley, Q.C., Ambassador to Austria, will be Deputy Head of the Delegation.

The Canadian Delegation will be composed of Members of Parliament, advisers from the provincial governments, representatives of the fisheries, oil, mining and shipping industries and fishermen's unions, and officials of the interested federal departments.

The Law of the Sea Conference is at the most crucial stage of its work. The 1974 Caracas and 1975 Geneva sessions of the Conference produced wide agreement on the two innovative principles which will form the basis of the proposed Law of the Sea treaty: the "common heritage of mankind" applicable to the international seabed area, and the 200-mile "economic zone" in which coastal states will exercise jurisdiction over living and mineral resources and in other essential fields. The New York session will have before it the "Single Negotiating Text" which was circulated at the end of the Geneva session after having been prepared by the chairman of the Conference's three plenary committees. This text represents an important advance in the negotiating process, although a number of important issues remain to be resolved.

The Canadian Delegation will be working actively to ensure that the New York session takes a decisive step toward approval by the international community of a comprehensive treaty which will regulate use of the oceans in a way which is equitable, workable and responsive to current needs and realities.