



# Statements and Speeches

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## PROGRESS TOWARDS INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT ON LAW OF THE SEA

From a Statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, to the House of Commons Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence, Ottawa, May 11, 1976.

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The Third UN Conference on the Law of the Sea has just concluded its fourth session in New York, and it is my considered judgment that it has achieved significant progress in most areas of its mandate. There may remain a number of important issues that will require further negotiation before full success is achieved, but the new negotiating text produced by the chairmen of the conference is a considerable improvement over last year's draft.

Let me review briefly developments as they affect the main issues the conference seeks to settle and their impact on Canada's interests.

The first part of the new text deals with the range of complex and radically new concepts that are being developed in order to regulate future activities in the international seabed area beyond the limits of national jurisdiction. It now provides, in my view, many of the basic elements necessary for a true accommodation of interests between developing and developed countries. Whereas the articles drafted in Geneva last year were regarded by the technologically-advanced countries as impracticable, the new text represents a more realistic approach to the problem. At the same time, the concept that the international area will be the "common heritage of mankind" and not an area of renewed colonial expansion has been given more specific and concrete meaning through a series of new draft articles and technical annexes covering a wide range of issues. Admittedly, a number of developing countries have reservations about the new text as they have yet to be fully satisfied that their interests and aspirations are adequately met by the far-reaching provisions of this new draft. Canada places high importance on the satisfactory resolution through further negotiations of the remaining contentious issues. These include some of direct interest to Canada, such as the composition of the proposed council, and more particularly the formula for production controls that would relate seabed to land-based mineral production.

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