

The Houston Economic Summit

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CANADA

Sommet économique de Houston

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Marine Environment

Canada has two key concerns in the marine environment area: the negative effect of marine pollution (particularly in coastal areas) on fishing, tourism, biodiversity and human health; and the adverse impact of overfishing and indiscriminate fishing practices on living resources of the high seas.

Certain regions in Canada's coastal marine areas are contaminated. This has resulted in the closure of fishing grounds and shellfish-harvesting operations for the protection of consumers' health. Action is being taken in Canada to combat this problem through the control of land-based pollution, atmospheric sources and the dumping of wastes at sea. More stringent standards have been implemented through recent legislation, particularly the 1988 Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

Canada has played a leading role internationally in promoting a global approach to combat marine pollution. Canada strongly supports the efforts of the International Maritime Organization to build upon the achievements of the London Dumping Convention in order to improve controls on the disposal of wastes into the sea, and to conclude a Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response (scheduled for signing in November 1990). In 1986 Canada hosted a conference which led to the Montreal Guidelines on Land-based Sources of Pollution. Canada is a leading proponent of establishing, through the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, more effective programs for monitoring the world's oceans. In April 1990 Canada hosted the Yellowknife Meeting on the Arctic Environment, where circumpolar states addressed problems in the Arctic Ocean.

Canada is also deeply concerned about the negative impact of overfishing and indiscriminate fishing practices on living marine resources. Over-exploitation of fisheries stocks that straddle the 200-mile limits of coastal states and the use of large-scale driftnets can undermine sustainable fisheries management. The result is the depletion of living marine resources and hardship for many coastal communities which have traditionally depended on fishing for their existence.

Canada supports enhanced international co-operation to protect and conserve living marine resources and to promote sustainable fisheries practices, as envisaged in the Law of the Sea Convention. Canada was a strong supporter of the 1989 Langkawi Declaration on Environment by Commonwealth Heads of Government, and a sponsor of the 1989 UN General Assembly Resolution on Driftnet Fishing. Canada supports the strengthening of regional fisheries organizations, the principal proponents of the sustainable development of living marine resources. All nations must co-operate with the conservation regimes adopted by recognized fisheries organizations and respect the conservation measures adopted by coastal states, if we are to preserve the world's fisheries resources for current and future generations.