

marking the first anniversary of Canada's membership on the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM).

Canada's candidacy for membership on the Executive Committee of the Commission, if successful, would enable us to contribute directly to important issues affecting women and all peoples of the Americas.

Peace and security in the hemisphere are fundamental to progress in other areas. As a result of the resolution on security and non-proliferation adopted last year, much progress has been made in redefining and updating this concept.

The scope of security has been broadened beyond traditional military concerns to include economic development, human rights, the fight against the illicit trade in drugs and environmental protection. Canada wants to see this work continue.

The issue of the environment and, in that context, high seas fisheries, is a matter of special concern for Canada, and indeed for the whole hemisphere. For a number of years, Canada has had to contend with overfishing of important fish stocks by foreign vessels just outside our 200-mile limit. This overfishing has contributed to the current crisis in our East Coast fishery.

Overexploitation of straddling stocks in contravention to sound conservation and management practices is a problem that touches many coastal states here today -- from Alaska and Newfoundland to Tierra del Fuego. At the Rio Summit next month, we are asking the world community to recognize principles and measures to conserve these stocks and to agree to an urgent international conference to resolve this problem in a manner consistent with the Law of the Sea Convention.

This is an initiative we originally commenced with Chile and Argentina. A number of other South American, as well as Caribbean and Central American states have now joined with us and countries from all parts of the world in supporting it. We must continue to work together to ensure success at Rio and beyond.

Every one of these issues is important, and I again commend the members of the OAS for the work that has been accomplished over the past year. But, for all the progress that has been made, we have suffered a number of distressing setbacks that have cast a shadow on the fundamental "raison d'être" of our organization.

One year ago, in Santiago, we paid tribute to a remarkable development that marked a turning point in the history of the OAS: we were 34 member governments attending the 21st General Assembly and all 34 -- without exception -- were democratically elected.