

The United Nations Seabed Committee (The Preparatory Committee for the Third Law of the Sea Conference) And Canada's Contribution

Introduction

This paper is a review of the preparations in the United Nations for the Third Law of the Sea Conference and Canada's involvement in these activities.

Establishment of Seabed Committee

As a result of a proposal by Malta, in 1967 the General Assembly adopted Resolution 2340 (XXII) which established an Ad Hoc Committee of 35 members to study "the question of the reservation exclusively for peaceful purposes of the seabed and the ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof, underlying the high seas beyond the limits of present national jurisdiction, and the use of their resources in the interests of mankind".

In 1968 the General Assembly approved the creation of a Standing Committee of 42 members to succeed the ad hoc committee. The membership of the Committee was further expanded to 86 countries at the 25th session of the General Assembly in 1970 when the Committee's mandate was broadened to include preparations for the third Law of the Sea Conference. It was again expanded in 1971 to a membership of 94, including for the first time the People's Republic of China.

Canada has been a member of the Committee since the establishment of the ad hoc committee in 1967.

Developments at UNGA XXV

(a) Declaration of Seabed Principles

A major achievement at the 25th session of the General Assembly was the adoption of Resolution 2749 incorporating a declaration of principles governing the seabed and the ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof, beyond