

To date negotiation of the agreements between the governments has been carried out on the bilateral level, as the United States has dealt with each of the three partners in turn. But beginning in September 1987 the United States, at the urging of the other partners, prepared a unified multilateral text and, after a final bilateral session with each partner, proposed to bring them together simultaneously in Washington to carry out discussions in mid-October. Thus in a few months we could see a multilateral convention setting forth the relations between the governments.

In addition to the material contribution referred to above, each partner will be closely involved in the design and operation of the space station, at every stage of its development. Thus they will have to allocate considerable human and financial resources to the program.

Such interdependency among several international partners in a project where the contribution of each differs in size and in kind is certainly not something that can be transposed easily into an agreement between the governments. The partners are attempting not only to define their rights and obligations in the cooperative framework, but to sanction in the texts various aspects of human behaviour on the space station. From this viewpoint, the space station project and the negotiations under way are liable to contribute appreciably to the development of the rules of international law.

Canada is especially concerned with certain questions dealt with in the context of the negotiations,