

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, and the Ambassador of Portugal, His Excellency Dr. Salvador Sampayo Garrido, today signed an agreement between Canada and Portugal respecting the future conduct of the traditional fishing practices of Portugal in Canada's territorial sea and fishing zones.

The Agreement was finalized last October in Ottawa. The Canadian Delegation was headed by Mr. J. Alan Beesley, Legal Adviser to the Department of External Affairs; officials from the Department of the Environment, Fisheries Service, also participated in the negotiations. The Portuguese Delegation was headed by Dr. Fernando Silva Marques and seconded by Commander J. Esteves Cardoso. A list of the delegates at these negotiations is annexed hereto.

The Agreement, which comes into force at once, is set out in an exchange of diplomatic Notes. It takes into account the June 1970 amendments to the Canadian Territorial Sea and Fishing Zones Act under which the breadth of Canada's territorial sea was extended from three to twelve miles and the basis was laid for the establishment of exclusive Canadian fishing zones in certain special bodies of water on Canada's east and west coasts. The special bodies of water, which include the Gulf of St. Lawrence, were enclosed by fisheries closing lines which came into force on March 10, 1971.

Under the Agreement, Portuguese vessels may continue to fish until July 1, 1978 in those parts of the outer 9 miles of the territorial sea that they have traditionally frequented. They may also fish until April 1, 1976, in the eastern half of the Gulf of St. Lawrence but outside a distance of 12 miles from the shore. On these dates, the traditional fishing practices of Portugal will terminate. Before the expiry of these periods, however, the Canadian Government, without commitment, has undertaken to review, in good faith, this Agreement to determine whether or not Portuguese vessels might be permitted to continue to fish in these areas under a special licensing arrangement. The issuance of these licences would be determined by the Canadian Government but such factors as the need for conservation measures to safeguard the interests of Canadian fishermen and the socio-economic aspects of this long-standing Portuguese fishery would be taken into account.

The Agreement, which reflects the concerns of both sides, was negotiated in the constructive and co-operative spirit which has prevailed throughout the long-standing fishing relations between Canada and Portugal.