

8 - UNCITRAL: Multi-National Enterprises

The Canadian Delegation suggested, during the Sixth Committee debate on the report of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) during the 1971 session of the U.N. General Assembly, that consideration be given to the possibility of UNCITRAL devoting attention to trade law issues raised by the activities of multi-national enterprises. During the current session of the General Assembly, the Canadian Delegation has proposed in the Sixth Committee, during its discussion of the report of UNCITRAL, the appointment of a small group of international law experts to examine the influence of multi-national enterprise activities on international trade and investment and the effect of such activities on international trade law. The Canadian proposal is intended, initially, to enhance the amount of information available to national governments on the activities of multi-national enterprises and thus better equip governments to regulate international trade and investment and even, conceivably, lead to the establishment of an international regime respecting the multi-national enterprise, a major step towards making the conduct of the multi-national enterprise a subject of international law.

It will be noted that the concern of the international community as to the influence and implications of the activities of multi-national enterprises has already been expressed in the ILO, at UNCTAD III and at the most recent session of ECOSOC, in all of which forums studies are going ahead on various aspects of the issues raised by the activities of multi-national enterprises. (The studies within the ILO concern the relationship between multi-national undertakings and social policy; resolutions passed at UNCTAD III recommend a proposed charter of economic rights and duties, and the further study of the effects of restrictive business practices; and ECOSOC has recommended the establishment of a "group of eminent persons" to study the role of multi-national enterprises and their impact on the process of economic