

Turning to the second great universal problem, how to preserve a natural environment that will continue to support life on earth, the United Nations has recognized its global nature by setting up a conference on the environment to be held in Stockholm next year, with a distinguished Canadian public servant, Maurice Strong, as secretary-general.

Canada has a special interest in environmental questions if only because we occupy such a large part of the earth's surface. Despite its vast extent and relatively small population, Canada has serious air- and water-pollution problems of its own. It also, inevitably, is a recipient of the pollution of other through the Great Lakes system and oil-spills on its coastlines, to name only two examples. This is why Canada is concerned about the inadequacy of existing international law relating to the preservation of the environment in general and the marine environment in particular.

Canada is working toward the development of an adequate body of law in this field. At the national level, the Canadian Government has adopted laws for the protection of fisheries from the discharge or deposit of wastes, for the prevention of pollution disasters in Canada's territorial waters and fishing zones, and for the preservation of the delicate ecological balance of the Arctic. At the twenty-fifth General Assembly, and last month in a resolution jointly submitted with Norway to the preparatory committee for the Third Law of the Sea Conference, Canada invited other states to take similar measures at the national level to prevent and control marine pollution as a move toward the development of effective international arrangements.

Canada is working towards a multilateral treaty régime on safety of navigation and the prevention of pollution in Arctic waters with other countries having special responsibilities in the Arctic region.

In a wider multilateral context, Canada is participating actively in the preparations for the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, the IMCO conference on marine pollution and the Third Law of the Sea Conference. These three conferences, taken together, present a unique opportunity for the development of a comprehensive system of international environmental law. As the first and widest-ranging of the three, the Stockholm conference will be of particular importance in helping states to come to grips with the apparent conflict between environmental preservation on the one hand and economic development on the other.

Canada is properly classed as a developed nation, but is still in the course of development, still importing capital and know-how, still engaged in building its industrial base. This makes Canadians aware of the conflict between the need to develop -- essential to economic growth -- and the need to preserve, and where necessary recapture, a viable natural environment -- essential to the survival of life.

For this reason Canada has a special understanding of the dilemma seen by the developing nations, where the highest priority must be given to economic and social development as the means to achieve a standard of living