

## NGO PARTICIPATION - PREPCOM IV

As of the end of PrepCom IV, over 1400 NGOs were accredited by the Preparatory Committee based on the criteria of "relevance and competence". This number is unprecedented in UN terms and includes over sixty Canadian organizations (list attached), all of whom will receive formal invitations to attend UNCED at Rio as observers.

Canada once again included on its official delegation representatives of environment and development NGOs, youth, women, indigenous organizations, labour, public policy and business and industry.

Early concerns that NGO participation in this PrepCom would be severely restricted due to the "negotiations" nature of the meeting were dealt with in the first Plenary where the PrepCom adopted procedures to facilitate NGO access to meetings. It was agreed that NGOs would be permitted to make statements only in formal meetings, but could attend informal meetings as observers. Meetings of contact groups, or so-called "informal informal" meetings would be closed to NGOs. Some difficulties were encountered in the implementation of these procedures, including insufficient copies of documents. Once these were resolved, the informal collaborative interaction between NGOs and delegates that had developed during previous PrepComs resumed.

One of the highlights of this PrepCom from a Canadian perspective was the role played by Canadian NGOs, in particular the chair of the CPCU working group on oceans issues, in focusing international NGO attention on the environmental and social impacts of high seas overfishing. A key element of this effort was the emphasis on the impact on the global marine ecosystem of unsustainable fishing practices.

The principles of partnership and collaboration that have evolved around the UNCED preparatory process have been incorporated in the revised version of the Secretariat paper "Strengthening the Role of Major Groups" (A/CONF.151/PC/L.72, formerly A/CONF.151/PC/100/Add.13). The objectives and activities set out in L. 72 establish a solid foundation for the full involvement of all societal groups in the follow up to Rio. Canada participated actively in the negotiation of all chapters, and delegation reports of these debates are included elsewhere in this report.

It is widely acknowledged that NGOs have participated to an unprecedented extent in UN terms in the UNCED preparatory process, and that Canada has played a leading role throughout the preparatory process in forging the partnerships with major groups and their organizations that