

On September 5, I gave the initial address at the St. John's Conference on the Conservation and Management of Living Resources of the High Seas, chaired by Ambassador Beesley. The Conference attracted representatives from around the world from coastal states that are suffering because of high seas overfishing, either of straddling stocks or of highly migratory species, like tuna. Among the distinguished participants was UN Under-Secretary General, Mr. Satya Nandan, Special Representative to the U.N. Secretary-General for the Law of the Sea.

Canada approached the St. John's Conference from the perspective that the goal of effective conservation and resource management in fisheries outside 200 miles is embodied in the principles of international conduct set out in the Law of the Sea Convention. The challenge we face is to achieve international acceptance of the practical measures needed to make the Law of the Sea Convention work as it was intended. Increased international understanding and co-operation is vital if we are to succeed in this and thereby achieve effective conservation and resource management of fisheries on the high seas.

The St. John's Conference advanced these goals. The conclusions of the Conference included support for the principle that high seas fishing should not have an adverse impact on coastal states and, with respect to straddling stocks, that measures applied on the high seas should be consistent with the management regime of the coastal state within the 200-mile zone. While these conclusions do not provide "instant international law", they reflect increasingly shared views as to how the Law of the Sea Convention should be interpreted and applied. This is a slow process, but that is how international law develops.

This brings us to this year's annual NAFO meeting held in Halifax in September. It was a very different meeting from last year's and radically different from the NAFO meetings in 1986, 1987 and 1988. This year Canada and the EC still had severe differences, particularly on northern cod. But, for the first time, there were important points of agreement. And, beyond that, there were important initiatives that Canada and the EC brought forward together that achieved across-the-board NAFO support.

Let me start with the differences. Canada proposed and NAFO once more approved, a moratorium for another year on catches of northern cod outside 200 miles. The EC voted against the moratorium, as it has in the past. As well, the EC abstained in the voting on two stocks for which their NAFO quotas are zero, but for which they have set unilateral quotas and taken significant catches in recent years. The two stocks are 3LN redfish and 3NO witch flounder, for which the EC unilateral quotas for 1990 are 6,000 t and 1,200 t respectively.