

Active co-operation continued with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and in September the head of the agency visited Canada to explore ways of expanding this bilateral co-operation.

Canada continued to involve itself in the work of international satellite organizations. A Canadian delegation attended the third Assembly of Parties of the International Telecommunications Satellite Organization (INTELSAT). Canada also took part in several preparatory meetings held to establish an international maritime satellite communications organization (INMARSAT), which is expected to come into being in 1979.

In addition, extensive work continued, both nationally and internationally, in preparation for Canadian participation in the 1979 World Administrative Radio Conference, sponsored by the International Telecommunications Union.

International Economic Law

The year 1978 was a very busy year for Canada in the field of international economic law, both in terms of making claims against other nations and of negotiating and signing international agreements.

The major event of the year in terms of claims was the crash of the Soviet satellite Cosmos 954 in the Northwest Territories on January 24, which set in motion a process of claims against the U.S.S.R. In a note dated February 28, 1978, Canada informed the Soviet Union that it would submit a claim for damages caused by the presence of radioactive debris from the satellite on its territory, and in particular, for the search and clean-up costs incurred in returning the affected areas to their original state of safety. Canada's claim for reparations will be based on the pertinent international agreements, notably the Convention on international liability for damage caused by space objects which was signed in 1972 as well as on the general principles of international law. The amount claimed will be over six million dollars, counting only the expenses incurred as a result of this incident. Canada must present its claim within the legal time limit, that is within 12 months of the incident; the U.S.S.R. will then have the same length of time to satisfy the claim, and if this is not done, Canada will be able to request settlement by a third party.

With respect to other claims in general, the Secretary of State for External Affairs announced on July 19, 1978 that the Government of Canada was beginning a claims program for Canadian citizens who had lost goods or properties in the German Democratic Republic. Since that date, interested parties have been invited to send information on the claims which they feel should be included in the next round of negotiations. This new program joins those already in effect with regard to some other countries, such as China, Cuba and Yugoslavia.