

agreement on the "ground-rules". As this process occurs, the potential for successful multilateral negotiation of a legal regime for foreign investment will increase significantly and it may then become possible to resolve the difficult issues of international law that defied resolution in 1974.

Canada's demonstrated support for the objectives of the UN's present efforts to deal with world economic disparity, as well as its ongoing experience in the regulation of foreign investment, should enable it to contribute to the development of new international law to meet the demands of the world community for greater social justice.

Other areas of international law are clearly ripe for further development. For the future, it will be increasingly important to be selective in seeking out opportunities to build upon past achievement, and to choose subjects for development or codification where there is likely to be common ground for all of the major interest groups that make up the UN membership. A selective approach would, of course, recognize the importance of the UN forum for dealing with problems of a global character, as well as alternative means of international co-operation between regional or like-minded states. The increasing attention given to political and doctrinal disputes within the UN and the frustration of hopes for the compulsory adjudicatory process should not be allowed to cloud the widespread recognition amongst states of the importance of the lawmaking process and the expanding prospects for its further development. Creation of international law, whether customary or conventional, is of necessity complex and laborious and at times painfully slow, but the United Nations has, where common interests are identified, proved remarkably adept in developing and codifying in a progressive manner most of the known legal standards of our day.

F. Conference diplomacy

As the membership of the United Nations approaches universality and its responsibilities widen to include practically all fields of human endeavour, special conferences on subject matters of universal concern but requiring expert knowledge have become a feature of UN operations. Growing awareness since about 1970 that continuing high rates of population increase and of economic growth impose costs that could become unacceptable in a world of limited resources has acted as a spur. Examples are the Conference on the Environment at Stockholm in 1972, the World Population Conference at Bucharest in 1973, the World Food Conference at Rome in 1974, the Law of the Sea Conference at Caracas, Geneva and New York from 1974-77, the International Women's Year Conference at Mexico in 1975, the Habitat Conference on Human Settlements in Vancouver and the World Employment Conference in Geneva in 1976. The United Nations International Water Conference took place in Argentina in March 1977 and conferences on racism and racial discrimination and on science and technology will be held in 1978 and 1979 respectively. The sixth and the seventh special sessions of the General Assembly were devoted essentially to development and economic co-operation, and the General Assembly will hold a special session on disarmament in 1978.