



news release

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GUIDELINES ON MARINE POLLUTION FROM LAND-BASED SOURCES

The Department of External Affairs and the Department of Environment announced that a United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Working Group of Experts under Canadian Chairmanship completed on April 19 work on a set of Guidelines for the Protection of the Marine Environment against Pollution from Land-Based Sources. The Group's third and concluding session was hosted by the Government of Canada in Montreal, April 11 to 19, 1985. Representatives from 28 countries, including 15 developing countries, participated in the meeting.

The Working Group was established as part of UNEP'S programme for the development of international environmental law, which was undertaken largely on the initiative of the Government of Canada. While pollution from land-based sources, according to some estimates, accounts for up to 80% of the pollution entering the oceans, the international law relating to it is not as well developed as that relating to vessel-sources pollution. The set of guidelines developed by the UNEP Working Group marks the first attempt by the international community to deal specifically with this subject at the global level. It is based on the obligation of states, set out in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, to protect and preserve the marine environment. In order to assist states in meeting this obligation, it sets out a check list of basic provisions for use in developing national legislation or international agreements for the protection of the marine environment against pollution from land-based sources.

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