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SIGNING CEREMONY FOR NEW CONVENTION ON NORTHWEST ATLANTIC FISHERIES

Canada today joined eight other signatories in a new Convention on Future Multilateral Co-operation in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries.

The signing ceremony in Ottawa marks the start of a process which will eventually result in the creation of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) to replace the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries (ICNAF). The new Convention will establish a framework for international co-operation which complements the changes in fisheries management brought about by extensions of national fisheries jurisdiction.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Don Jamieson, and the Honourable Roméo LeBlanc, Minister of Fisheries, represented Canada at the ceremony. Mr. Jamieson signed the Convention on behalf of the Government of Canada.

"The conservation and management of fish stocks which migrate within and beyond the limits of Canadian jurisdiction are of concern to Canada," Mr. Jamieson said. "It is obvious that we cannot afford to ignore the interaction of Canadian management measures within our limits with those taken internationally on the high seas."

"For this reason, we are firmly committed...to multilateral co-operation and co-ordination in the field, and are pleased that Canadian proposals to this effect have been found generally acceptable by other participating governments," Mr. Jamieson added.

Mr. LeBlanc hailed the new Convention as a significant international achievement, offering proof of the continuation of good will between the coastal states of the Northwest Atlantic and those other states that fish in the area.