

"Canada is unique among the world's coastal states in the degree of harm suffered by our fishermen because of overfishing of straddling stocks outside 200 miles," said Mr. Valcourt.

"Adherence by all states to conservation and management decisions taken by NAFO is needed to give effect to the principles in the U.N. Law of the Sea Convention and thereby end overfishing on the high seas off Canada's Atlantic coast."

At the Houston Economic Summit meeting held in July, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney spearheaded the adoption by the leaders of the seven major industrial countries of a call for international co-operation in conservation of living marine resources, recognition of the importance of regional fisheries organizations (like NAFO) and respect for conservation regimes.

During the recent visit to Canada of Soviet Fisheries Minister N. Kotlyar, he and Mr. Valcourt issued a joint statement of both countries' commitment to the effective operation of regional fisheries organizations (like NAFO) in the conservation and management of straddling stocks.

Canada took a leading role in the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly, in December 1989, of a resolution calling for the cessation of large scale pelagic driftnet fishing in the Pacific Ocean and other area of the high seas.

"Canada shares the global concern with the destructive effects of driftnet fishing," said Mr. Valcourt. "Large scale driftnet fishing is a highly indiscriminate and wasteful fishing method, that threatens effective conservation of fish stocks, as well as birds and marine mammals."

"Canada has pursued many initiatives, in terms of direct appeals to world leaders, raising public awareness internationally and in the development of international law to put an end to non-sustainable fisheries practices," said Mr. Clark. "The St. John's Conference, by itself, cannot provide solutions. It can however, add to the climate of increased international awareness and co-operation that is needed to provide lasting solutions to these serious problems."

The St. John's Conference is being chaired by Canada's Ambassador for Marine Conservation, J. Alan Beesley who led the Canadian delegation to the Law of the Sea Convention and chaired the Convention Drafting Committee. Amongst the St. John's Conference participants are such leading international experts as Mr. Satya N. Nandan, U.N. Under-Secretary General and Special Representative of the Secretary General for the Law of the Sea, and Dr. Lee Alverson, President of Natural Resources Consultants and a member of the Independent Review of the State of the Northern Cod Stock, chaired by Dr. Leslie Harris.