

Another important task awaiting the Conference will be to reconcile the potentially serious conflicts of interest amongst states. On the one hand, there are the major maritime powers with significant shipping or distant-water fishing fleets and navies serving global strategic interests which demand maximum mobility; the interests of these states are best served by maintaining the largest possible area of the seas free of constraints. On the other hand, there are the coastal nations which, in these times of increasing dependence on sources of food and raw materials, are interested in obtaining access to and control of the renewable and non-renewable resources contained in and under waters adjacent to their coasts. The Conference will have to find a better equilibrium between these conflicting interests and, therefore, complement a reasonable measure of freedom on the high seas with recognition of coastal state interests.

Thus, the over-all objectives of the Conference go far beyond finding solutions to specific issues: they involve a radical restructuring of the legal system which heretofore has regulated man's activities in relation to ocean space. Up to now, there has been a clear cut distinction between state sovereignty over land and a narrow territorial sea on the one hand and complete freedom on the high seas on the other. The Conference may well result in a major departure from this age-old regime in establishing some forms of jurisdiction which would seek to reconcile the interests of individual states with those of the international community as a whole in a more functional manner.

Canadian Interests

The forthcoming Law of the Sea Conference will be dealing with a number of areas that are vital to Canadians.

Canada has one of the longest coastlines in the world and it is essential that its whole marine environment be adequately protected from contamination. There exist a number of areas which are particularly sensitive from an ecological point of view, either by reason of their harsh climatic conditions or because of the nature of the marine resources found therein. Such are the Arctic, Labrador, Newfoundland and Gulf of St. Lawrence areas, where high concentrations of ice, short daylight