

text of draft articles on these issues represents a major step forward in restructuring the principles of the law of the sea and in developing new concepts of ocean resource management.

These developments, in conjunction with results achieved in previous sessions, reflect the substantial progress which the conference has made since 1973 and indicate that it is nearing the end of its work programme. Many of these items are of direct significance and benefit to Canada. For example, the 200-mile fishing zone, which is now considered by most states to be a principle of international law, has already contributed to the remarkable resurgence of the fisheries industry in the Maritime Provinces. The 12-mile territorial sea, which Canada proclaimed in 1970, is now an accepted legal norm.

Of particular importance to Canada, the conference has produced a comprehensive system of legal rules for the protection of the marine environment, including an enhanced role for the coastal states in the prevention and control of vessel source pollution as well as special provisions for protection of fragile ecosystems in ice-covered waters.

Facing on three oceans, with a broad continental shelf, a major fisheries industry, an important land-based mineral industry and an ecologically vulnerable Arctic, Canada has a vital interest in the outcome of the Law of the Sea Conference.

In view of the progress already achieved, and without minimizing the difficult issues still to be resolved, for the first time there is a real prospect of successfully completing the substantive negotiations. Apart from the intrinsic importance of the new rules of law which have been developed, not only for Canada but for the international community as a whole, the proposed convention will make a major and fundamental contribution towards the foundation for a stable world order. The proposed convention will not only lay down new rules of law of far-reaching importance but will also provide the basis for the peaceful settlement of disputes. If the United Nations is successful in this endeavour, the results will provide concrete evidence of the kind of contribution which the United Nations can make towards a more secure world.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs emphasized the Government of Canada's firm commitment to the conclusion of a new comprehensive Constitution of the Oceans. The Canadian Delegation will work actively to achieve this important objective at the forthcoming session. She intends, if possible, to participate in the conference at an appropriate stage.