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NEW YEAR MARKS CREATION OF NORTHWEST ATLANTIC FISHERIES ORGANIZATION

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Don Jamieson, and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the Honourable Roméo LeBlanc, today announced the coming into force of the Convention on Future Multilateral Cooperation in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries, effective January 1, 1979.

The new Convention provides for the establishment of a Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) to replace the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries (ICNAF) which has governed fishing in the northwest Atlantic since 1950.

NAFO will provide a new basis for the international management of fisheries in the area beyond and immediately adjacent to the 200-mile fishing zones established by coastal states in the northwest Atlantic, and will serve as a forum for scientific consultation and cooperation for the area as a whole. This new Organization is composed of a Scientific Council, responsible for scientific data review and discussion; a Fisheries Commission, responsible for the management of fisheries beyond the areas under the jurisdiction of coastal states; a General Council, responsible for the supervision and coordination of NAFO activities, and a Secretariat.

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The new Convention was developed at a series of international meetings held during the past two years. The final signature ceremony was hosted by the Canadian Government in Ottawa last October. Since that time, in addition to Canada, the following have ratified the NAFO Convention: Cuba, the European Economic Community, the German Democratic Republic, Iceland, Norway and the U.S.S.R. Additional ratifications are expected in the near future.

Mr. Jamieson hailed the new Convention as a major international achievement, built on a pre-existing store of good will and cooperation among the coastal states of the Northwest Atlantic and the other states that fish in the area.

"NAFO will bring us even closer to realizing our common objectives of conservation and optimum utilization of the important fishery resources in the area", Mr. LeBlanc said. "More specifically, the new Convention and Organization will recognize Canada's special position and interests in the northwest Atlantic and provide for the controlled management of fisheries in the area beyond and adjacent to our 200-mile fishing zone. NAFO will help us to ensure that good management and conservation is exercised on stocks outside as well as inside the Canadian 200-mile limit."