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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
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JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ ON CANADA-NORWAY
DISCUSSIONS ON FISHERIES MATTERS
OF MUTAL CONCERN,
OSLO, SEPTEMBER 15-16, 1975

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES EXTÉRIEURES

Officials of the Canadian and Norwegian Governments met at Oslo on September 15th and 16th, 1975 to discuss fisheries matters of mutual concern.

The talks were based on the common concern of both the Canadian and Norwegian sides for the welfare of their coastal communities and the rational management, conservation and utilization of the living resources of their coastal waters.

Both sides attached great importance to their future co-operation in the field of fisheries, taking into account the anticipated extension of the limits of their national fisheries jurisdiction and their desire to promote the orderly development of the Law of the Sea. The two sides recognized that pursuant to relevant principles of international law, Canada and Norway as coastal states have special rights and obligations in respect of the conservation and management of the living resources in areas beyond and adjacent to waters now under their fisheries jurisdiction, in accordance with the consensus now emerging from the United Nations Law of the Sea Conference. They considered it imperative and appropriate to establish now the principles upon which their mutual fisheries relations shall be conducted in future, pursuant to and in accordance with developing principles of international law. They also considered it desirable to co-ordinate and harmonize their actions in extending their respective areas of fisheries jurisdiction.

The two sides agreed to enter into formal negotiations at an early date with a view to elaborating a bilateral agreement on the terms and conditions governing continued fishing by the Norwegian fleet, under Canadian regulation and control, in areas under future Canadian jurisdiction beyond the present limits of the Canadian territorial sea and fishing zones off the Atlantic Coast, taking into account the anticipated extension of the limits of jurisdiction through the establishment of an economic zone or through the extension of fishery limits to 200 nautical miles. They reviewed in a preliminary way the broad outlines of such an agreement, noting the existence of bilateral agreements between the two governments concerning fisheries and sealing which would continue to be operative according to their terms and in respect of the areas to which they apply.

In the light of the serious declines in stocks in the area covered by the International Convention for the North West Atlantic Fisheries (ICNAF) and the North East Atlantic Fisheries Convention (NEAFC), the two sides recognized that urgent and effective action is needed to preserve the fisheries in other areas for the benefit of coastal fishermen and the world at large.

They reviewed Canadian proposals for the conservation and management of the fish stocks off the Canadian Atlantic Coast. These proposals were first advanced at the June 1975 meeting of ICNAF and are scheduled for further discussion at the special ICNAF meeting to be held at Montreal in September. They involve a substantial reduction in foreign fishing effort for groundfish, a reduction in the total allowable catch of threatened stocks and higher quotas for the coastal state in accordance with its harvesting capacity. The Canadian side stressed the importance Canada attaches to securing agreement on these proposals. The Norwegian side emphasized that a substantial reduction in fishing effort is required both in the NEAFC and in the ICNAF areas. Norway would continue to work actively for solutions reflecting this need, and would at the ICNAF meeting later this month maintain its broad support for Canada's efforts.

The Canadian side was composed of L.H. Legault, Director General, International Fisheries and Marine Directorate, Department of the Environment as Chairman, and M.B. Phillips, Department of External Affairs.

The Chairman of the Norwegian side was H. Vindenes, Deputy Director General, Department of Legal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.