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# news release

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## CANADA: FIRST NATION TO RATIFY THE VIENNA CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE OZONE LAYER

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The Right Honourable Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs, and the Honourable Tom McMillan, Minister of the Environment, announced today that Canada is now a party to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer. The Canadian Instrument of Ratification was deposited today at the United Nations in New York. Canada signed the Convention when it was first opened for signature on March 22, 1985, and is the first nation to ratify it.

"Canada's early ratification of the Convention signals this country's continuing active involvement in international environmental protection, as well as its firm commitment to the development of new international legal principles in this area," said Mr. Clark.

"The Convention is important because it is truly global in nature. Moreover, it commits states to take action co-operatively before serious damage is done," he said.

The Convention commits participating nations to protect human health and the environment against adverse effects resulting from modifications to the ozone layer. It also provides for international co-operation in research, monitoring, scientific assessment and the exchange of information on matters pertaining to the status of the ozone layer.

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Recent scientific calculations indicate the possibility of ozone layer depletions of 10 per cent or more within 70 years if chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) emissions continue to grow unchecked. Furthermore, an unexpected 35 per cent depletion of the Antarctic ozone layer has been recently detected. The depletion, which has occurred during the spring of every year since the early 1970s, has not yet been explained by the international scientific community.

Although the predicted changes in the ozone layer in general are not large, even small changes are important. Scientific calculations show that a one per cent depletion of the ozone layer would lead to a two per cent increase in ultraviolet radiation and to a four per cent increase in skin cancer.

International efforts aimed at global control measures to protect the ozone layer have already begun. A series of socio-economic workshops and conferences are expected to result in a draft protocol to the Convention in mid-1987.

Mr. McMillan said, "Consistent with our general concern about the toxic burden in the atmosphere, Canada has been one of the leading nations in research, monitoring and regulatory measures to protect the ozone layer. Canada operates the World Ozone Data Centre for the World Meteorological Organization. A Canadian remote-sensing instrument, the Brewer spectrophotometer, is being sold internationally to modernize the global network of ground-based ozone layer measurements."

"Since 1980, regulations under the Environmental Contaminants Act have banned the use of CFCs in hairsprays, anti-perspirants and deodorants. The use of these chemicals in Canada has been reduced by 45 per cent."

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