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CANADA WELCOMES U.N. RESOLUTION ON DRIFTNET FISHING

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, the Minister of Environment, the Honourable Lucien Bouchard and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the Honourable Tom Siddon, today welcomed the adoption of a Resolution by the United Nations General Assembly recommending a moratorium on all high seas driftnet fishing.

Canada was one of the key sponsors of the Resolution, which also recommends that the expansion of driftnet fishing in the North Pacific be stopped immediately.

"This Resolution represents a positive breakthrough on this issue," stated Mr. Clark. "Canada's sponsorship and efforts at securing wide consensus reflect our commitment to international cooperation in curtailing high seas driftnet fishing."

Driftnet fishing can be a highly indiscriminate and wasteful practice. It is widely considered to threaten conservation of sea life, including salmon, tuna, birds and marine mammals.

"This is a major step towards protection of the living environment on the high seas. The Resolution effectively commits the international community to safeguard the vast, fragile ecosystems of the world's oceans and seas against devastation by driftnet fishing. We will insist that this commitment is carried out fully and effectively" said Mr. Bouchard.

Mr. Siddon noted, "We must build on the Resolution by seeking enhanced bilateral monitoring and enforcement accords with Asian countries who practice driftnet fishing. The U.N. Resolution will provide considerable assistance in bringing illegal trafficking in Pacific salmon by such countries to an end."

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The Resolution recommends an end to all high seas driftnet fishing by mid-1992 unless effective conservation and management measures are taken to prevent unacceptable impacts of such fishing. The Resolution also calls for expanded collection and sharing of scientific data used to assess the impact of driftnet fishing with a view to conserving living marine resources. It recommends a review of this data by mid-1991 with the objective of implementing any appropriate further regulatory and monitoring measures.

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