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THE CANADIAN DELEGATION AT THE TENTH SESSION OF THE LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Dr. Mark MacGuigan, announces that he will head the Canadian Delegation to the Tenth Session of the Third United Nations Law of the Sea Conference which opens today in New York and runs until April 24. J. Alan Beesley, Ambassador to the Law of the Sea Conference, is Vice-Chairman of the Delegation.

The Conference agreed to conclude negotiations at the session so that the final Law of the Sea Convention could be adopted and signed this autumn in Caracas. A recent U.S. State Department announced that its delegation will try to ensure that negotiations do not end, pending a review by the new Administration, has now put this objective in some doubt. Canada hopes, however, that the United States will be persuaded to join with all other delegations in trying to conclude negotiations at this session.

Most issues at the Conference are now settled. Among those requiring further consideration will be the principles governing the delimitation of maritime boundaries; the right of the EEC* and national liberation organizations to become parties; the establishment of a Preparatory Commission to lay the groundwork for the seabed mining regime; interim protection for deep seabed mining investments and the question of the seabed nickel mining production controls. With regard to the latter issue, which is of particular concern to Canada, the Canadian delegation hopes that a recently released United Nations study on the effects of production controls will serve as a basis for modifications to the control system, to make it more responsive to the interests of land-based, mineral-producing countries.

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*European Economic Community.

The Draft Law of the Sea Convention produced at the end of the last session in Geneva, already 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 include the 12-mile territorial sea; the 200-mile exclusive economic zone; the sovereign rights of the coastal state over the resources of the continental shelf to 200 miles or, beyond, to the outer edge of the margin; the primary interest of the state of origin in respect of salmon spawned in its rivers; international powers of the coastal state for the prevention of pollution from ships in Arctic waters; and enhanced measures for the prevention of pollution in other waters.

The Drafting Committee, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Beesley, held a very productive intersessional meeting from January 11 to February 27 and has nearly completed its task of putting the draft into acceptable treaty language.

With a vital interest in the Law of the Sea, Canada is committed to the successful conclusion of the Conference this year.