

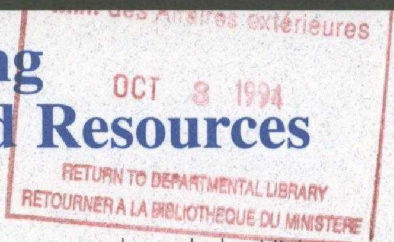
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GLOBAL AGENDA

CANADA'S FOREIGN POLICY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

• VOLUME 2, NUMBER 1 •

Conserving and Protecting Canada's Marine Environment and Resources



With the world's longest coastline and significant economic reliance on its three surrounding oceans—the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Arctic—Canada has a vital interest in the marine environment. With this special interest goes a responsibility for maintaining a healthy marine environment, including supporting environmentally sound economic activity. Today, however, the global marine environment and its resources are under increasing pressure. Restoring the health of our oceans, as called for in Agenda 21, requires an international effort dedicated to action and co-operation.

According to Canada's Marine Environment Quality Framework, "The quality of the marine environment is of local, regional, national and global importance and is essential for the sustainable development of marine resources."

Internationally, Canada takes a strong leadership position on marine environment issues, drawing upon the recommendations of Agenda 21's Chapter 17 on Oceans. Since 1985, Canada has played an active role in developing a comprehensive strategy to deal with marine pollution from land-based sources. From June 6 to 10, 1994, in Montréal, Canada hosted a meeting of experts on the Montréal Guidelines (1985) under the auspices of the UN Environment Program. Participants prepared an outline of a program of action to pre-

vent pollution of the marine environment from land-based sources.

Recognizing the growing pressures on the Arctic marine environment, Canada is co-leading, with Norway, a multinational working group on the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) as part of the Arctic Environment Protection Strategy. Established at the 1993 ministerial meeting in Nuuk, Greenland, the working group will focus on co-ordinating national programs to reduce marine pollution from land-based sources, led by Canada, and sea-based sources, led by Norway. As a first step, PAME will work on identifying all major sources of pollution of the Arctic marine environment and will assess the adequacy of existing legal and policy instruments for protection of the marine environment.

"The quality of the marine environment is of local, regional, national and global importance and is essential for the sustainable development of marine resources."

Canada also works closely with other maritime nations to deal with the global environmental fisheries crisis caused by the overfishing of the "global commons." With the Atlantic fishery crisis acting as a catalyst, Canada is working with

these nations, through the UN, to develop a practical and effective set of rules to manage the high-seas fishery of straddling and highly migratory stocks. The goal is a legally binding solution that would provide for effective conservation and management measures, surveillance and control, and compulsory binding dispute settlement.

On the Pacific coast, Canada continues to press for conservation and equity as outlined in the Pacific Salmon Treaty signed by Canada and the United States in 1985. Since the treaty was signed, Canadian interceptions of salmon of U.S. origin have steadily declined while U.S. interceptions of fish of Canadian origin have increased to record levels, especially in Alaska. Both countries are aware of this development; however, progress on implementing the equity principle has lagged far behind progress on implementing sound conservation measures. The implementation of the equity principle would facilitate the process of establishing long-term fishing regimes and allow both countries to realize the production potential of the Pacific salmon.

Canada is strongly committed nationally and internationally to conserving, protecting and rehabilitating marine environments and their resources. The global commons offers tremendous resource potential. The challenge will be to realize this potential in ways that meet environmental, socio-economic and resource management goals.

Department of Foreign Affairs
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Protecting the Fragile Arctic Marine Environment


Recognizing the need to protect the fragile ecosystems of the Arctic, Canada and seven other Arctic nations (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States) met in Rovaniemi, Finland, in 1991 and adopted the Arctic Environment Protection Strategy (AEPS). Because of the special relationship of indigenous people to the Arctic and its environment, three Aboriginal organizations assisted in the development of the AEPS: the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, the Saami Council and the Russian Association of Peoples of the North. The ministers responsible for the AEPS met in 1993 in Nuuk, Greenland, and will meet for a third time in 1995 or 1996 in Canada.

Under the AEPS, working groups look at environmental problems in the air, on land and in water, as well as emergency prevention. A task force

has recently been established to examine sustainable development, including the sustainable use of renewable resources by indigenous people in the Arctic.

The newest working group, on the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME), met for the first time in Oslo, Norway, in May 1994 to design its work plan.

Participating were the eight Arctic countries, observers from the three Aboriginal organizations as well as representatives from other AEPS working groups. PAME's work over the next two years will be divided into two broad categories: sea-based sources of marine pollution, led by Norway, and land-based sources of marine pollution, led by Canada. PAME will attempt to identify and collect information about all major sources of pollution of the Arctic marine environment and will


assess the adequacy of existing national and multinational legal and policy instruments for protection of the marine environment. Taking into account the "precautionary principle" widely endorsed by the Rio Declaration, it will make recommendations to the AEPS ministers on the need for further measures to protect the marine environment. 

Newfoundland Offshore Burn Experiment

Over the last several years, environmental damage caused by oil spills—such as the *Exxon Valdez* in 1989—has pointed to the need to develop techniques that will immediately reduce the effects of such ecological accidents on marine resources.

On August 12, 1993, a consortium of over 25 agencies from Canada and the United States, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, successfully conducted an experimental "burn" off the island of Newfoundland. It involved the release of two oil spills of about 50 tonnes each into a fire-proof boom.

Each burn was monitored for emissions and certain physical parameters. The experiment was the largest of its type ever conducted worldwide: 20 vessels, seven aircraft and 230 people were involved in the operation at sea.

Several findings have resulted from this trial, the most important being that burning at sea is a feasible and practical oil-spill countermeasure. The fate and behaviour of oil components and emissions from fire, still not fully understood, could be the subject of future experiments. 


2 Land-Based Sources of Marine Pollution

Coastal ecosystems around the world, where 90 percent of the sea's living marine resources spend critical portions of their life cycles, are affected by humans almost everywhere and are becoming degraded on a wide scale.

Canada strongly believes in the need to establish a co-ordinated approach to this issue and to focus international attention on pollutants that are at the base of marine degradation. As a long-time, active participant in the establishment of international agreements dealing with marine resources, Canada hosted, in 1985, the final negotiating session of the Montréal Guidelines for the Protection of the Marine Environment against Pollution, and recently hosted a meeting of experts to update the 1985 guidelines.

The Montréal Guidelines were developed to assist governments in

preventing, reducing and controlling marine pollution from land-based sources. In conjunction with the international agreements, the guidelines were proposed as a broad framework for developing regional agreements, where these did not exist, and for the preparation, in the long term, of a global convention on land-based sources of marine pollution. The guidelines provide a checklist of basic provisions, rather than a model agreement for meeting the needs of specific regions.

From June 6 to 10, 1994, a group of experts met again in Montréal to review and update the guidelines and to formulate an international action plan. Some 150 delegates from around the world attended the meeting, including representatives of governments, international organizations and international non-governmental organizations. 

Canada Takes Action to End Foreign Overfishing

From the earliest settlement of Canada, Atlantic coastal communities have depended upon the resources of the sea for their livelihood. Today, that livelihood is threatened. Since the mid-1960s, Northwest Atlantic fish stocks have declined sharply. Today, there is practically no cod fishing in Canada. Even the traditional right to fish with a hook and line for food has been eliminated for conservation reasons.

In 1977, Canada declared a 200-mile exclusive fishing zone and imposed strict controls on fishing inside this zone. However, this area does not encompass the entire continental shelf of the Grand Banks that extends off the southeast coast of Newfoundland. About 10 percent of the Banks, known as the Nose and Tail, are beyond Canada's 200-mile limit. The conservation of the important fish stocks beyond Canada's 200-mile limit is the responsibility of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO). Allowable catch limits and other conservation measures are decided in collaboration between NAFO and its 15 member states.

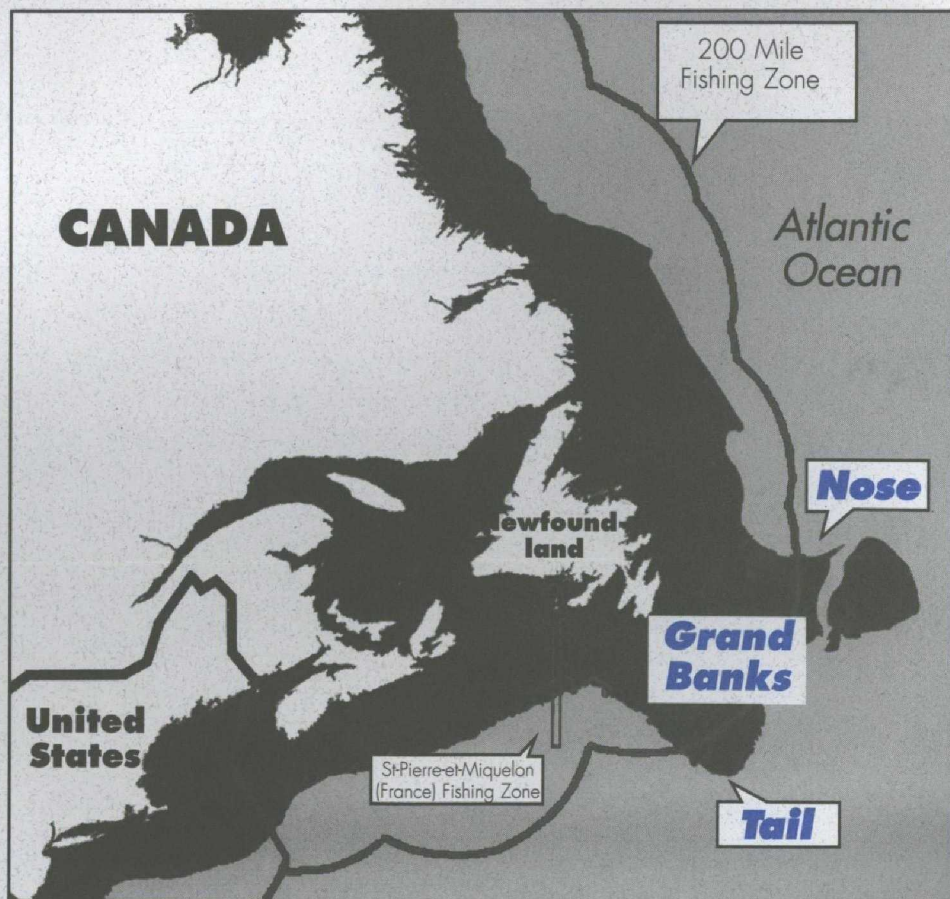
However, serious threats to the viability of stocks in the Nose and Tail continue. Fishing by stateless vessels and by vessels carrying flags of convenience, registered in countries that exercise no control over their fishing activities, is conducted without regard to conservation concerns. Such vessels are targeting fish stocks subject to NAFO moratoriums. These fish are often too young to reproduce; therefore, such fishing sabotages any hope for recovery of this precious protein resource. In order to end this exploitation, the federal Parliament unanimously approved the introduc-

tion of legislation in May 1994, enabling Canada to take action to protect important fish stocks on the high seas that straddle Canada's 200-mile limit.

The legislation provides the Government of Canada with the legal authority to make regulations for the conservation of the high-seas fish stocks that exist both within the Canadian 200-mile limit and in the adjacent high-seas area beyond the 200-mile limit. The regulations list the straddling stocks to be protected, establish conservation and management measures and list the classes of foreign vessels to which these measures apply, such as stateless vessels, vessels not entitled to fly the flag of any state, and vessels flying

flags of convenience. The legislation also provides for the arrest of vessels, if necessary, and procedures to ensure that this is done reasonably and responsibly.

The Canadian government recognizes that it has its own responsibilities in this matter and that Canada cannot circumvent its own international fishing management obligations. To this end, the Canadian Minister of Fisheries and Oceans recently served notice of the rules on Canadian high-seas fishing to all Canadian swordfish longline and bluefish tuna fishermen, warning them that the Government will no longer tolerate uncontrolled fishing by Canadian vessels on the high seas.



Environmental Review of Uruguay Round

On April 15, 1994, Canada joined some 120 countries in signing the final act of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations. The day also marked the release of the federal government's environmental review of the outcome of the Uruguay Round, which identifies how the agreements match Canada's commitment to environmental protection and sustainable development. The review concluded that many of the agreements will have a small, positive impact on Canada's environment. As part of the final package, a Trade and Environment Committee has been created within the new World Trade Organization to address trade and environment concerns.

Secretariat of the North American Agreement on Environmental Co-operation

The environmental "side agreement" to the NAFTA, the North American Agreement on Environmental Co-operation (NAAEC) between Canada, the United States and Mexico, requires the strengthening of environmental co-operation in North America, the promotion of sustainable development on a continental basis and enhanced enforcement of domestic environmental laws. The NAAEC establishes the Commission for Environmental Co-operation, consisting of a ministerial-level Council, a central, trinational Secretariat, and a Joint Public Advisory Committee. The Secretariat will be located in Montréal. Until the Secretariat is operational, any inquiries should be directed to:

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The Commission on Sustainable Development: Second Session, May 1994

by John Fraser PC, QC, Ambassador for Environment

The UN Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) was established in 1992 by the UN General Assembly to review and monitor the results of the UN Conference on Environment and Development and to facilitate progress toward sustainable development worldwide. It met for its second session May 18-27, 1994, under the chairmanship of Klaus Töpfer, Germany's Minister for the Environment. Since the first session of the CSD dealt primarily with organizational issues, this second session was the first time that members were able to focus exclusively on substantive issues. According to the multi-year agenda of the CSD, this session addressed the sectoral issues of health, fresh water, human settlements, toxic chemicals, hazardous wastes and radioactive wastes.

Canada's priorities were to clearly define the role of the CSD as a high-level political forum, a catalyst for action, and the co-ordinator within the UN on sustainable development; to develop a simpler format for annual national reports to the CSD; to emphasize the value of national sustainability plans; to build agreement on the need to develop standard indicators for sustainable development to measure progress in implementing Agenda 21; and to establish a good preparatory process for the review on forests in 1995.

The session ended with a two-day high-level segment involving 37 ministers from the 53 CSD member countries. As part of the high-level segment, Sheila Copps, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, and head of the Canadian delegation, chaired an evening seminar on women and sustainable development.

During the high-level segment, ministers underscored the importance of the CSD having a high political profile for it to be an effective catalyst for sustainable development, and the importance of including ministers responsible for development, planning and finance in future meetings, both sessional and intersessional.

It was decided that the CSD would sponsor two intersessional working groups: one on finance, and one dealing with technology transfer and the sectoral issues to be discussed at the 1995 session—land resources, deforestation, desertification, mountain development, agriculture and rural development, and biodiversity, as well as the progress in advancing the Forest Principles and the conventions on biodiversity and desertification. It was also agreed that Minister Töpfer, in consultation with his CSD Bureau colleagues, will look at how the various country-hosted forest initiatives, including the Canada-Malaysia Intergovernmental Working Group on Global Forests, can be co-ordinated for the 1995 session.

In the months ahead, we will be working within Canada and with our fellow CSD members on Canadian priorities for the CSD and priorities for its next session, to take place in April 1995. The second session was a good reminder for me and for everyone in New York that while much has been done already, much more is required to make sustainable development a reality. The challenge still remains very much before us.

Canada and Russia Form Arctic Monitoring Network to Study Toxic Pollutants


Canada, in co-operation with the Russian Institute of Global Climate and Ecology, has established a Siberian monitoring station to study toxic air pollutants. The Siberian site, established by Canada at the mouth of the Lena River (73°N/127°E) in northern Russia, is part of an Arctic Monitoring Network that includes three other sites in northern Canada. Toxic air pollutants in the region are being measured to identify the extent and severity of pollution in the Arctic and the pollution's pathways into the region. The information obtained will help explain the occurrence of such man-made compounds as industrial pollutants, pesticides and toxic metals in remote northern regions where they are neither manufactured nor used.

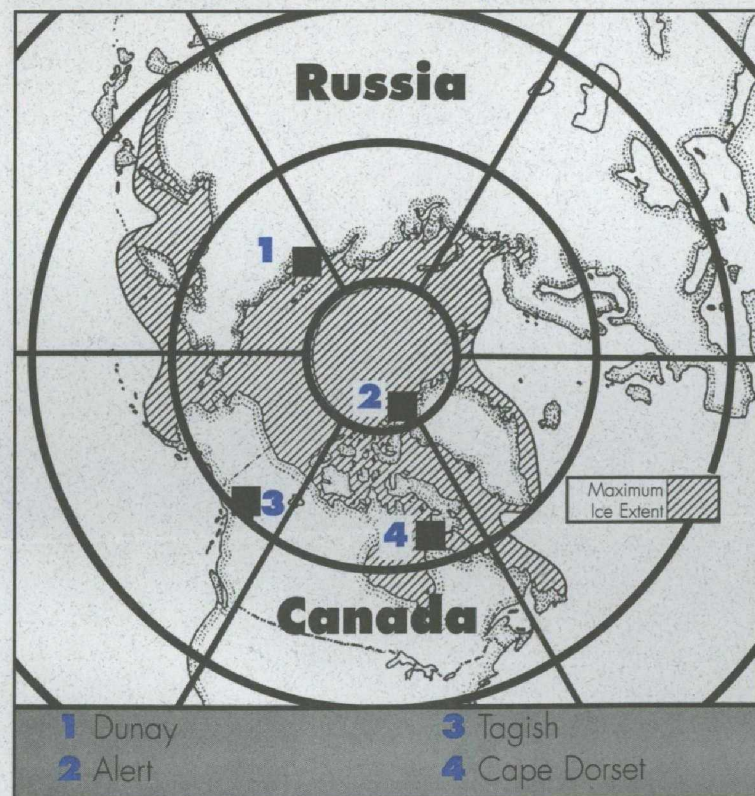
increases as one progresses up the food chain. This is giving rise to concentration in local foods at levels that generate concern for human health. However, despite the implications, local people have been advised to continue to consume these items, because of the nutritional benefits of fresh foods.

According to a 1992 study on Broughton Island, which is off the east coast of Baffin Island:

- 11.6 percent of women and 22.5 percent of men exceeded Health Canada's maximum acceptable daily intake of toxaphene, a pesticide and persistent organic pollutant that has never been routinely used in Canada; and
- 63 percent of children and 39 percent of women of childbearing age exceeded Health Canada's acceptable levels of PCBs in their blood.

With the linking of the Russian and Canadian sites, it will be possible to trace the air pollutants and study how they change as they move from the Russian coast, pass over the Arctic Ocean and arrive in the Canadian Arctic. Over a year of

continuous monitoring has been performed to date, and sample analysis is in progress. 



Recent Canadian studies have demonstrated that the concentration of persistent organic pollutants

International Conference on Population and Development

As citizens of an interdependent global community, our daily activities are inextricably linked to population change, natural resource use, the environment and economic and social development.


From September 5 to 13, 1994, Cairo will be the host city for the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). The ICPD will build on policies developed at the conferences on environment and development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) and human rights (Vienna, 1993) and lay the groundwork for the World Summit on Social Development (Copenhagen) and the Conference on Women (Beijing) to be held in 1995.


Two of the main environmental objectives of the ICPD are:


- ensuring that population, environmental and poverty eradication factors are integrated in sustainable development policies, plans and programs; and
- reducing both unsustainable consumption patterns and negative impacts of demographic factors on the environment.

It is expected that up to 17 000 persons will attend the conference, including representatives from some 1000 non-governmental organizations.


Facts and Stats


 Canada is a maritime nation. It has the longest coastline in the world (243 789 km, including islands), the second-largest continental shelf (3.7 million km²) and a total offshore area of more than 6.5 million km².

 Arctic waters are generally less biologically productive and contain less species diversity than the southern seas; however, highly productive ice-free areas, called *polynyas*, provide polar oases for overwintering whales, seals, polar bears and seabirds. Intense spring phytoplankton "blooms" attract several species of marine mammals, birds and fish in great abundance.

 The Earth's ocean basins and associated areas cover a surface of about 361 million km², or 71 percent of the Earth's surface.

GLOBAL AGENT

 The largest tides in the world, reaching 15 to 16 metres, occur in the Bay of Fundy, located between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The bay's tidal power was harnessed as early as the 17th century.

 In addition to their role in supplying a wealth of natural resources essential to our economy and society, the oceans off Canada's shores are important as corridors for seaborne trade and commerce, as sources of energy and non-renewable mineral resources, as recreational areas and as unique natural wildlife areas.

Sources: *The Times Atlas and Encyclopaedia of the Sea*

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