



communiqué

No: 27
No.:

DIFFUSION: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
RELEASE: MARCH 22, 1978

THE CANADIAN DELEGATION TO THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE GENEVA, MARCH 28 - MAY 19, 1978

The Canadian Delegation to the Seventh Session of the Third United Nations Law of the Sea Conference, which will be held in Geneva between March 28 and May 19, 1978, will be headed by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Don Jamieson, with the assistance of the Honourable Ronald Basford, Minister of Justice and Attorney-General of Canada, and the Honourable Roméo LeBlanc, Minister of Fisheries and the Environment. Mr. J. Alan Beesley, Canada's High Commissioner to Australia, will act as Deputy Head of the Delegation.

The Seventh Session will represent a crucial step in preparing a new convention of the seas. Although the last session produced more results than the previous ones, many sensitive and contentious matters have still not been settled, and some major disagreements remain on the issue of the international seabed regime.

The Sixth Session, however, enabled discussions to take place on most of the unresolved issues and, in certain major areas, the Conference was closer than ever to reaching a consensus. These discussions resulted in the drafting of a new Informal Composite Negotiating Text. This document reflects Canada's objectives in several areas: the twelve-mile

...2



territorial sea is universally accepted, the special anti-pollution measures in the Arctic are receiving increased international support, special measures have been taken with regard to salmon conservation, and a concensus is emerging around the concept of the 200-mile economic zone, which supports Canada in establishing the 200-mile exclusive fishing zone.

However, this achieved progress must be laid out in a genuine and universally accepted convention. But the Conference will not be able to adopt such an instrument until it has solved the more difficult issues, particularly those pertaining to the seabed mining regime. Canada has taken part in several informal meetings in order to advance negotiations on this issue. Discussions on this topic at the Seventh Session are nevertheless expected to be difficult as well as in certain other areas, such as access of land-locked and geographically disadvantaged countries to the living resources of Coastal States, the provisions for settlement of disputes pertaining to the sovereignty of Coastal States over resources, the definition of the continental shelf and the related issue of revenue sharing and the delimitation of the maritime boundaries between adjacent or opposite States.

In view of the substantial progress made to date, and without minimizing the problems which remain to be solved, Canada is determined to obtain the long awaited global convention on the law of the sea and its delegation will be active in this respect during the forthcoming Seventh Session.