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CROSBIE OUTLINES OVERFISHING AND MARKET ACCESS EFFORTS

International Trade Minister John C. Crosbie today outlined the federal government's promotion of increased market access for the Canadian fishing industry and details of the European public awareness campaign on overfishing in his keynote address to the Fisheries Council of Canada at their annual meeting in Saint John, N.B.

The federal government is "committed to working with the fishing industry to meet the challenges that it now faces. Our goal is to make possible a brighter future for the fishing industry and for Atlantic Canada," Mr. Crosbie said.

Mr. Crosbie outlined the benefits provided by the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement in gaining access to Canada's largest and most important market for seafood products. He outlined the effectiveness of tariff elimination, the right to appeal countervailing and anti-dumping duties, and binational dispute settlement mechanisms.

Access to other major markets, which represent 44 per cent of Canadian fish exports, are covered by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and Mr. Crosbie noted Canada's recent GATT proposal on improved market access with the goal of achieving increased exports and market share, of diversifying product mix and of expanding value-added seafood products.

Mr. Crosbie outlined the efforts of the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and himself as Minister of International Trade in dealing with the problem of foreign overfishing.

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The European Economic Community (EC) decided not to deliver on its commitment to conservation at the recent Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) annual meeting and Canada is continuing to press the EC to adopt NAFO quotas through contacts with appropriate European ministers and through a public information campaign in Europe, Mr. Crosbie said.

Mr. Crosbie pointed out that during a recent visit to Europe, his message to European ministers and European media was that the EC should stop overfishing and abide by NAFO decisions.

Mr. Crosbie outlined details of activities under the European public information campaign for conference delegates and highlighted the appointment of, and important contribution which will be made by Alan Beesley as Ambassador for Marine Conservation.

"Canada will continue to seek to have the international legal framework under the Law of the Sea work through NAFO. If the international legal framework cannot be made to work in spite of our best efforts, then Canada will seek to achieve acceptance by the international community of nations of a more clear and effective set for rules for this purpose," Mr. Crosbie said.

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