



news release

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CANADA WELCOMES U.N. DRIFTNET FISHERIES RESOLUTION

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, John C. Crosbie, and the Minister of the Environment, the Honourable Jean Charest, today welcomed the adoption by the U.N. General Assembly of a new resolution calling for a global moratorium on large-scale driftnet fishing on the high seas by the end of 1992.

The resolution calls for driftnetting countries to begin to phase out their driftnet fisheries in January 1992, attain a 50 per cent reduction by June and terminate them altogether by the end of 1992. The Japanese government has already agreed to terminate driftnet fishing by this date.

"This resolution is an important part of the worldwide effort to end this practice, which so seriously threatens marine life," said Mrs. McDougall. "We expect that countries that have not yet made a firm commitment to impose a ban on driftnet fishing by their fleets will soon follow Japan's example."

"The new driftnet resolution is an historic development that represents a major step forward in ensuring responsible fishing practices on the high seas," said Mr. Crosbie. "Canada has undertaken exhaustive scientific and enforcement activities to deal with the driftnet problem. The adverse effects of high seas driftnet fishing are not acceptable in any form."

"This resolution reflects the commitment of countries like Canada to the sustainable use of resources and protection of marine ecosystems," said Mr. Charest.

Studies by Canadian and other international scientists have confirmed the harmful effects of driftnets on the marine ecosystem. These studies, as well as intense international pressures, led to the adoption of this resolution by the U.N. General Assembly.

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