

Following a brief period of assessment, Canada decided in February 1988 to make démarches to some 45 countries in all regions urging governments to make special efforts to bring the Special Session to a successful conclusion. In particular, Canada stressed the importance of developing a co-operative approach, maintaining flexibility, seeking common ground, and avoiding polarization. While many countries professed to be more optimistic and less concerned than Canada, it soon became evident that these views were shared to a greater or lesser degree. One result of this concern was the sense of cooperation and general paucity of rhetoric which characterized the Special Session. Where the special efforts by Canada and other concerned states ultimately failed, however, was in our inability to bridge the gaps between strongly held national positions and diverse approaches to multilateral ACD.

For Canada, an important adjunct to the UNSSOD III preparatory process were consultations with interested groups and individuals representing a broad spectrum of interests. The Consultative Group on Disarmament and Arms Control held a meeting in Ottawa, April 14-16, 1988 for the specific purpose of discussing Canada's role at UNSSOD III. The entire 50-member Consultative Group was invited to join in a series of plenary and working group meetings with Canada's Ambassador for Disarmament, Douglas Roche, and officials from the Departments of External Affairs and National Defence. The major themes of the meeting were based on the substantive agenda items for the Special Session. The working groups focused on these themes (Review and Assessment, Developments and Trends, Disarmament Machinery and Education) and presented reports containing a broad range of recommendations. On the final day, the Director General for International Security and Arms Control in External Affairs, David Peel, provided an initial response, noting that the majority of the recommendations were either worthy of further serious consideration or already embodied in Government policy, and that only a few contained elements which could not be incorporated in Canadian approaches at UNSSOD III. Canadian initiatives at UNSSOD III relating to the advancement of women in the disarmament process, and the establishment of a UN orientation programme for NGO representatives concerned about peace and security issues, arose as a direct consequence of NGO recommendations.

(B) THE MIDDLE

UNSSOD III commenced in grand style with higher-level representation than either UNSSOD I or UNSSOD II. Following a balanced and forward-looking statement by UN Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar, statements were delivered