

Delegations will be aware of the paper (A/S-15/25) which has been jointly submitted by Canada and the Netherlands on this subject. It reflects our shared view not only on the potential importance of the United Nations in the multilateral verification process but also our strong belief that the United Nations role must be elaborated and developed with special care and deliberation. It is important that no steps be taken which might have the unintentional effect of inhibiting rather than facilitating the negotiation and conclusion of effective arms control agreements. All delegations are urged to examine carefully the thoughts set out in that paper. It is hoped this will lead to a consensus among us that an expert study of the type proposed in the paper should be one of the key recommendations of this special session. Such a step would have lasting importance for the multilateral arms control and disarmament process and the role of the United Nations in it.

It is increasingly recognized that levels of armament are more a symptom than a cause of the mistrust which prevails among numerous States, hence the attention to confidence-building measures as a means of diminishing levels of mistrust. The more traditional arms control measures direct themselves towards the constraint of military capabilities. Confidence-building measures go further by attempting to provide indications of military intent. This is truly a pioneering endeavour. What is involved here are such important principles as openness, transparency and predictability.

The conclusion of the Stockholm Agreement in 1986 was a landmark in the establishment of confidence-building measures as a major international device for reducing levels of mistrust among States. This agreement is being effectively implemented. Several inspections of military exercises have already been conducted with a high degree of success. This special session could usefully commend the members of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe for their success in negotiating and implementing effective confidence- and security-building measures and urge that they be maintained and further developed. States in other regions could be encouraged to consider actively the negotiation and implementation of analogous measures.

The Stockholm Agreement has indeed built confidence. So too can UNSSOD III build confidence throughout the whole international community if we assess new trends and developments in an objective manner with the aim of ensuring that future developments will strengthen - not weaken - global security.