



### First Committee

The agenda of the First Committee (the main UNGA forum for arms control, disarmament and international security matters) contains more items than are considered by any of the other six main committees of the General Assembly. At the forty-first General Assembly, there are expected to be nearly 80 resolutions on ACD and international security topics. In recent years, the number of First Committee resolutions has increased dramatically (from 44 in 1978 to 73 in 1985), leading many delegations to call for a re-structuring of the agenda. This matter has yet to be considered by the UNGA.

The following are some of the main issues of special interest to Canada that will be considered by the First Committee:

(1) *Comprehensive Test Ban.* At UNGA 40, there were three resolutions dealing with various aspects of nuclear test bans, one introduced by New Zealand and two by Mexico. Canada and over 20 other countries abstained on the resolutions introduced by Mexico at UNGA 40 because they were judged to present several practical problems relating to the most appropriate and effective method of achieving a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Canada voted for the resolution on this subject introduced by New Zealand at UNGA 40. It reaffirms the conviction of the General Assembly that all nuclear tests in all environments should be abolished by all countries for all time. The Conference on Disarmament (CD) is urged to resume immediately its substantive work relating to a comprehensive test ban, including the issue of scope as well as issues of verification and compliance, with a view to the negotiation of a treaty. This resolution has been introduced in alternate years by New Zealand and Australia.

(2) *Outer Space.* At UNGA 40, a resolution entitled "Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space" was adopted by a vote of 151 in favour, none against, with two abstentions. Drafted by non-aligned delegations, the final product was a result of agreements reached between all groups at the UN.



Delegates voting in the First Committee, the main UN General Assembly forum for arms control, disarmament and international security questions.

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It called upon the CD to consider as a matter of priority the question of preventing an arms race in outer space and also requested the CD to establish an *ad hoc* committee in 1986 with a view to undertaking negotiations for the conclusion of an agreement or agreements to prevent an arms race in outer space in all its aspects. An *ad hoc* committee was established by the CD and the report of its accomplishments will be considered at UNGA 41.

(3) *Chemical Weapons.* Canada and Poland alternate in taking the lead on a resolution which calls on the CD to intensify its negotiation of an agreement on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of all chemical weapons and on their destruction. At UNGA 40, Canada took the lead on this item, which is traditionally uncontentious and is adopted by consensus. Poland will lead at UNGA 41.

(4) *Prohibition of the Production of Fissionable Material for Weapons Purposes.* This traditional Canadian resolution, which receives a very high vote, will be introduced once again this year.

(5) *Verification.* At UNGA 40, Canada succeeded in having adopted, by consensus, a resolution (40/152a) entitled "Verification in all its Aspects". In reference to the verification resolution, former Canadian diplomat John Holmes, writing in the *Ottawa Citizen* on February 8, 1986, noted: "It was obvious to me, furthermore, that (the Canadian) success was attributed to the respect in which Canada is held as a constructive and independent-minded force in the Assembly." This is the first resolution passed on that subject in the 40 General Assemblies of the UN. It built upon the consensus language of the UNSSOD I Final Document and called "upon member states to increase their efforts towards achieving agreements on balanced, mutually acceptable, verifiable and effective arms limitation and disarmament measures." Further, it invited all member states to submit to the Secretary-General "their views and suggestions on Verification principles, procedures and techniques to promote the inclusion of adequate verification in arms limitation and disarmament agreements and on the role of the United Nations in the field of verification." The General Assembly will, at its forty-first session, consider the replies and decide on further action.