

Mr. Chairman,

I should like first to echo the words of gratitude expressed by previous speakers for the meticulous arrangements which have been made for us here by our Finnish hosts. The warm reception we have all received is in the best traditions of Northern hospitality. We are also in debt to Finland for their patient efforts and material support which were instrumental in helping to organize and carry through the preparatory consultations to a successful conclusion over many months of meetings.

Our Ambassadors at those consultations did their job well: their careful labours have produced mandates which carry the consensus of all the participants. Given the kind of goodwill now being expressed, there are reasonable prospects this conference can produce results of enduring value.

Not only have the preparatory consultations produced a useful document; they have also taught us certain lessons about this new form of negotiation by consensus -- lessons that will be of value in the later stages of the conference. The first lesson is that the road to success is to be found through serious and detailed negotiations accompanied by a willingness on all sides to approach difficulties in a spirit of accommodation rather than confrontation.

The second is that there can be no artificial time limits or other constraints; if representatives of sovereign states seeking greater security and co-operation are forced to rush to their conclusions the inevitable result will be agreement at the minimum level. With such a result everyone would lose. Our objective should be not quick results but the greatest positive content in the documents that will emerge from this conference.

The third lesson is that negotiations of the kind in which we are engaged cannot be isolated. They form part of a general process of improving relations; a process which includes other multilateral negotiations and also bilateral contacts. Notable in this respect are the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks and the agreements reached recently by Mr. Nixon and Mr. Brezhnev. We also welcome, in particular, the recent decision to open negotiations in Vienna on October 30 on mutual reduction of forces and armaments and associated measures in Central Europe. Progress in one set of negotiations ought to, and no doubt will, have a favourable effect on the others as they move ahead together in the same general period of time.

We are laying the groundwork for a new kind of world -- a world which should be better than the one we have known. This is cause for encouragement, even though the challenge is daunting. But ours is only a beginning. The document before us has in all conscience been difficult enough to prepare but it provides only a framework for the second stage of this conference and is not by itself any guarantee of a successful outcome. It has already been pointed out that the mandates are not final formulations. But they embody agreed concepts and express a basic balance among the interests of the states participating in this conference. As such, they form an acceptable basis for the elaboration of more detailed and substantive documents. The course which has been set is a good one; we should keep to it.