

CTBT

The conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty (CTBT) is a long-standing Canadian objective and Canada aimed, at UNGA 47, to generate further support for this objective, buoyed by the French, Russian and US testing moratoria. The CTBT resolution was adopted by a vote of 159 in favour, one opposed (US) and four abstentions (China, France, Israel, UK). This exceeds the favourable margin achieved at UNGA 46, where the vote was 147 in favour, two opposed (France, US) and four abstentions (China, Israel, Micronesia, UK).

Cut-off

Canada introduced its traditional resolution calling for the prohibition of the production of fissionable material for weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. In light of the recent (and prospective) large-scale dismantlement of nuclear weapons and the US decision to unilaterally cease production of fissionable material for weapons purposes, Canada hoped for even broader support than in the past for this

resolution. In the event, the vote was 164 in favour, none opposed, and three abstentions (India, UK, US). France later requested that its "yes" vote be changed to an abstention. This compares favourably to the UNGA 46 tally of 152 in favour, two opposed (France, US) and three abstentions (China, India, UK).

In addition to taking the lead or acting as an original co-sponsor on several important resolutions, including the above, Canada was instrumental in brokering the deal that enabled the UN Disarmament Commission resolution to pass by consensus and played a key role in launching the process of UN arms control and disarmament reform.

With the end of the Cold War, the major powers appear less interested in entering into multilateral arms control negotiations resulting in legal commitments. Instead, they seem to favour unilateral undertakings at a political level. Canada, among others, believes that multilateral institutions provide a more stable environment in which to achieve security. The changing UN role in international security — and unease among some non-aligned

delegations about the growing influence of the Security Council — underlay First Committee deliberations and had the positive effect of making delegations focus and cooperate on ways of dealing with the reform process.

During UNGA 47, Canada also successfully chaired both the Barton Group and the newly-constituted Group of Democratically Oriented States (GODOS). This last, like the Barton Group, provides a forum for consultation on resolutions. GODOS has a broadly-based membership that cuts across traditional East-West and North-South dividing lines.

The First Committee will reconvene from March 8 to 12 in New York for a special session with the purpose of reassessing the multilateral arms control and disarmament machinery. Member States will examine the respective roles of the First Committee, the UN Disarmament Commission, the Conference on Disarmament and the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, and will look at ways to enhance the efficiency of these bodies. The aim is to reach agreement on recommendations for action. ■

Reassessing the UN Disarmament Machinery

In a decision adopted by the General Assembly at UNGA 47, Member States were asked to provide their views on UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's report entitled "New Dimensions of Arms Regulation and Disarmament in The Post-Cold War Era." Below are excerpts from Canada's official response, focusing on the roles and functioning of the UN disarmament machinery. See Disarmament Bulletin 19 for further Canadian reaction to the Secretary-General's report.

We strongly agree with the Secretary-General that the time is ripe for a thorough reassessment of the UN disarmament machinery in order to ensure that it is able to meet new realities. A useful starting point is to recall the main functions of each of the three multilateral arms control and disarmament (ACD) bodies — the First Committee, the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC) and the Conference on Disarmament (CD) — then to identify problems in the effective carrying out of these roles, and finally to identify practical means of responding to these problems.

The First Committee

In Canada's view, the role of the First Committee — a global, deliberative body — is to identify priorities on the multilateral ACD agenda and to build support and momentum as an essential first step in the broader process of international norm-building as it relates to arms control and disarmament. This process not only contributes to the identification and promotion of broad principles, but increasingly — as the arms register so graphically demonstrates — focuses on concrete steps that the international community can take towards the achievement of these broad goals or norms.

The First Committee continues to provide a useful framework for the UN membership to elaborate and clarify positions on a variety of ACD issues. Rationalization of the First Committee's work is progressing by, for example, combining the debate on disarmament and international security items. We should now take the logical next step of combining action on these two sets of items. Only then will we

have fully integrated our consideration of means — ACD measures — with our desired end — the maintenance of international peace and security.

We need to accelerate the task of rationalization, of setting concrete and practical priorities, and of ensuring fewer resolutions and more genuine dialogue. Now that East-West polarization is over, there is the possibility for greater functional cooperation on specific issues among delegations from differing groups and perspectives...

The UNDC

The UNDC's primary role is to allow focused discussion of a limited agenda without the pressure of voting on resolutions. Its function encompasses conceptual discussion, consensus-building with respect to arms control and international security-related issues (e.g., transfer of technology), as well as the identification of global and regional measures for negotiation elsewhere. The UNDC also prepares *(continued on p. 17)*