

In the effort to negotiate a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons, there were several welcome developments during the current session of the Conference on Disarmament. The USA Delegation made an important clarification of its thinking on how a treaty might apply to differing social systems. The USSR Delegation made new and positive substantive proposals relating to certain aspects of verification of a treaty, which my Government hopes will soon be supplemented by further proposals dealing with other aspects of verification. The Canadian Government hopes also that the important recent UK initiative will facilitate a convergency of views on the sensitive and vital issue of challenge inspection. Under energetic and notably competent chairmanship, the Ad Hoc Committee has made further progress toward resolving some of the more difficult technical issues. The Canadian Delegation submitted two working papers as a contribution to the collective effort. The holding by the Netherlands of a workshop relating to verification of non-production, as well as the broad attendance at that workshop, was gratifying and encouraging. It is important that the momentum thus generated be maintained, including through inter-sessional work to the extent practicable.

The issue of a ban on nuclear tests has properly continued to occupy a prominent place in the CD agenda. The negotiation of a comprehensive nuclear test ban remains a fundamental objective of the Canadian Government. We were therefore disappointed at the failure to agree on a mandate for a subsidiary body on this item, which would have permitted practical work in preparing the ground for the negotiation of such a ban. This session, nevertheless, was not without positive developments. We have noted carefully, and welcome, the recent Soviet statement indicating a forthcoming approach on technical and institutional matters relating to the establishment and operation of a global seismic monitoring network. We are also pleased that the USSR and the USA are holding expert level discussions on nuclear test issues. Australia's call for a decision to establish an international seismic network is wholly consistent with Canada's longstanding concern to develop means for reliably verifying a test ban. The Conference on Disarmament is aware that we are upgrading a seismic array in our own northern territory and have commissioned other related research, and that we will be conducting a technical workshop in Ottawa this autumn, at which we hope CD members will be widely represented. In the Canadian view, a gradual incremental step-by-step approach will be required if a comprehensive test ban is to become a reality. We intend to pursue vigorously our efforts to this end in the Conference on Disarmament and in other forums.