

*Statements by Ministers*

Members of the joint committee held hearings across this country, from St. John's to Vancouver to Yellowknife. Thousands of Canadians made their views known, either directly or through organizations, on issues as diverse as arms control, export development, and human rights in South Africa. The committee produced a practical and sensible report, achieved by consensus and unanimous in its recommendations.

The response tabled today has two parts. First is a general statement of government policy in the seven main policy areas that the Special Joint Committee addressed. Second is a detailed response to all the recommendations made by the committee. Those number 121. The statement as a whole provides a picture of the Government's foreign policy. It underlines our commitment to the constructive internationalist approach that we have been pursuing from the moment we came to office.

The Government accepts the great majority of the committee's 121 recommendations and has already carried out some of them. There are a few recommendations that we are unable to accept, sometimes because we believe the remedy suggested is not the best available, sometimes for financial reasons. In each instance, we propose a different or less costly alternative.

*[Translation]*

Mr. Speaker, through the Committee Canadians expressed deep concern about the need for progress in arms control. The government fully shares this concern. We welcome the Committee's support for the six arms control and disarmament objectives enunciated by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) in October 1985.

With our allies we are working to build on the possibilities for progress identified at Reykjavik. Our common goal is to create a safer, more peaceful world, notably through radical reductions in nuclear arms. Canada is also using its influence to try to prevent the loosening of existing restraints on the arms race in space and on earth. We are playing an active role in multilateral forums. This year and last the UN General Assembly unanimously approved Canadian-sponsored resolutions on the importance of verification to arms control agreements. We contributed to the recently concluded Stockholm Conference, which reached agreements on confidence-building measures that will reduce the risk of accidental war in Europe.

The government agrees with the Committee that Canada has an important contribution to make in the area of peace-keeping. We have added the Sinai to the areas where Canada is helping to keep the peace. Canada is also attempting to play a moderating role in the resolution of regional conflicts. We are strongly supporting the Contadora process in Central America while opposing intervention by third parties. In the Middle East, we are giving strong support to efforts to negotiate a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute.

The Committee urged that Canada work in concert with the international community to combat terrorism. We are doing

that. The International Civil Aviation Organization recently accepted a Canadian proposal that should lead to significant improvements in airport security around the world. Meanwhile, we are strengthening our domestic defences against terrorism, so that what we do ourselves supports our efforts to persuade others to act.

*[English]*

The committee attached especially high priority to making the Canadian economy more competitive internationally. The launching of the new round of multinational trade negotiations and the bilateral negotiations with the United States hold out the prospect of improving access to our most important markets. The National Trade Strategy, in which we have enjoyed the full co-operation of the provinces and the private sector, is producing substantial results. We are at the same time meeting the committee's recommendations aimed at exploiting the potential of the dynamic Asia-Pacific market. New trade offices, for example, have been opened in Bombay, Shanghai, Osaka and Auckland.

We have paid close attention to the vital role of small and medium-sized businesses in developing our international trade. We will consult with them to see how our export development and our export financing services can be further improved to meet their needs.

The Government is also doing everything possible to meet the committee's recommendations in the area of aid and development. We have set out some broad directions in the statement tabled today. We are maintaining real growth in aid and development funding despite cut-backs in many other areas. We are ensuring that our aid programs focus primarily on the poor of the world. The critical role of women in development will receive greater recognition. The proportion of aid we disperse through non-governmental organizations is already higher than for any other major donor. Canadian youth will be given the opportunity for greater involvement. We also intend to give greater attention to human resource development in our aid programs and to the potential of the private sector in developing countries.

The Government shares the committee's belief that foreign students constitute an important asset for Canada as well as for developing countries. We intend to increase substantially the number of CIDA scholarships. We are seeking to develop in co-operation with the provinces a national strategy to make it easier for foreign students to study in Canada.

The Government today affirms what so many Canadians told the committee, that the international promotion of human rights should be a fundamental and integral part of our foreign policy. The Government has already changed the export control regulations so that they take greater account of human rights considerations. Henceforth, officers in the Department of External Affairs will receive appropriate training if they are being posted to countries whose Governments seriously violate human rights. So will officers at headquarters on geographic