

UNSSOD II AND CANADA

INTRODUCTION

The first resolution passed at the first session of the United Nations General Assembly in January 1946 was concerned with the international control of atomic weapons. It established an Atomic Energy Commission, composed of members of the Security Council plus Canada, with instructions to prepare proposals for

- ensuring the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes only;
- the elimination of atomic and other weapons of mass destruction;
- a system of safeguards, including inspection, to prevent violations.

The Commission was unable to agree on proposals, and the world is still searching for ways of controlling nuclear weapons. But the principles set out in this resolution have guided all international efforts to find a solution.

The Charter of the United Nations authorizes the organization to deal with disarmament*. Article 11 says that the General Assembly *"may consider the general principles of co-operation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments"*, and Article 26 makes the Security Council responsible for formulating plans *"for the establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments."*

* The UN has traditionally used the word 'disarmament' to cover all questions relating to the control, regulation or destruction of armaments. The experts differentiate between 'disarmament', which is designed to reduce arms and armaments, and 'arms control', which is designed to control them either in terms of numbers, types or geographic areas. In the U.N., the term 'arms limitation' is used in lieu of 'arms control'.