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I wish to emphasize that a negotiated, verifiable comprehensive nuclear test ban remains a fundamental objective of the Canadian government. Canada continues to favour a careful, step-by-step approach to a nuclear test ban, both on procedure and substance although we respect the views of those who differ. The Canadian government is clearly on record as favouring the re-establishment in the conference of a subsidiary body to address this subject, and I now reiterate that position. Such a body must have a concrete and realistic mandate which would enable the immediate resumption of substantive work, with a view to negotiation of a treaty. We suggest that priority attention be given to reaching agreement on a program of work, which might address the issues of scope, as well as verification and compliance, with appropriately structured working groups. We sense among the countries represented in this room a growing recognition of the potential value of a focussed approach along these lines. The Canadian delegation would be ready to take an active and constructive part in implementing an agreed work program. We hope too that, in support of such efforts, there could be general agreement to press ahead with our important work on seismic exchanges.

Finally, although it is not a separate agenda item, I would like to speak briefly on the broad issue of verification. As is well known here, this is a subject of longstanding priority for Canada, going well beyond mere rhetoric. Significant amounts of the scarce financial and personnel resources available to the Canadian government are being devoted to the serious and methodical examination of the problems and issues connected with verification. Within Canada's Department of External Affairs, for example, a special verification research unit has been established, with an annual budget of a million dollars. As one concrete step, Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs announced at UNGA 40 that the Canadian government has decided to upgrade in a substantial way its seismic facility in our Northwest Territories. By this and other means, we intend to accumulate a store of experience and add to our expertise which can increase Canada's ability to contribute in practical and constructive ways to the international negotiation of effective, verifiable arms control measures.

This Canadian approach reflects our firm belief that the verification aspects of arms control and disarmament agreements are in no way subsidiary or secondary elements but are integral and essential parts of such agreements, in some cases amounting to preconditions to final agreement, but not obstacles to be utilized to obfuscate or postpone serious negotiations. This approach reflects our view that questions of confidence are central to all arms control negotiations. The re-configurations of national arsenals which arise from arms control agreements both reflect and reinforce a certain level of reciprocal confidence in the intentions and capabilities of the parties. When it is appreciated that states are being asked to give up security based on weaponry in return for security based on arms control agreements, the importance of this element of trust and confidence is readily apparent. If the necessary levels of confidence are to be sustained and increased, all parties to such agreements must be able to assure effective compliance through adequate verification. Conversely, the inability adequately to assure compliance can lead to reduced levels of confidence, an increase of mistrust and, through a kind of vicious spiral, could bring the whole arms control and disarmament process to a halt. We, of course, recognize that the legitimate need for adequate verification can be abused. For our part, we are convinced that a rational but imaginative approach to verification, far from being a smoke-screen, is a prerequisite in every serious arms control negotiation. In circumstances when all parties are negotiating in good faith, meticulous attention to verification provisions will not be a hindrance to the negotiating progress. On the contrary, it should facilitate such negotiations.

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