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## WORLD DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE

*The following is a statement by the Canadian Representative, Lieutenant General E.L.M. Burns, in the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, on November 23, 1965, explaining the Canadian vote on the resolution proposing the convening of a World Disarmament Conference:*

...Canada voted in favour of the resolution and, in so doing, gave its support to the principle of convening a conference in which the nations of the world, both those inside the United Nations and those not represented here, would have an opportunity to exchange views and express their opinions on the all-important question of disarmament. We made our decision to support this idea even though we believed, as I indicated to the Committee in my statement of October 19, that there were a number of practical problems which would subsequently have to be resolved. The eventual decision by Canada - and I suppose that of any other states - as to participation in the conference, will depend on a number of factors, including the resolution of these practical problems, but, in the meantime, we have been encouraged by the widespread recognition on the part of the sponsors of the resolution and others, that the concern which we had expressed is legitimate and is designed not to obstruct the holding of a World Disarmament Conference but to ensure that it will be properly organized, so that useful results can be achieved. In this connection, I should like to refer to the statement made yesterday by the distinguished representative of Algeria when he was formally introducing the final text of the draft resolution. He said at that time, and I quote...“...important questions

have quite properly been raised: questions as to dates, participation, duration, financing, etc. No one can minimize their importance”.

The distinguished representative of Byelorussia attempted, in his intervention on November 19, to suggest that the Western countries did not want a conference at all and were doing all in their power to delay its convening by laying down unacceptable conditions in advance. Today, without exception, the Western nations have voted in favour of the principle of convening a World Disarmament Conference. No conditions have been laid down, but suggestions have been made as to what matters of organization the preparatory committee should deal with. I am sure that the representative of Byelorussia appreciates, as everyone else must, that if the World Disarmament Conference is to be successful, it must be properly organized. This requirement for careful preparation for a large conference is not our idea, of course, but has been widely recognized for some time. A concrete example of this was the UNCTAD meeting that took place in Geneva in the spring and early summer of 1964. Before this very successful conference could be held, a preparatory group was required to meet off and on for more than a year to ensure a properly organized and productive meeting.

### PREPARATORY COMMISSION

In view of the many complicated questions which will have to be resolved, the Canadian Delegation supports the proposals of a Preparatory Commission to go into all the aspects of the problem. This idea has been supported by a great many representatives,