

NPT 1995 EXTENSION CONFERENCE

Since its entry into force on March 5, 1970, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has constituted the cornerstone of the world's non-proliferation system. It provides a political and legal barrier to the legitimization of additional nuclear weapons, the legal foundation for the commerce in nuclear equipment, material and technology as well as the basic commitments to be verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) - Safeguards System. More than 150 States have ratified the NPT since its signature in 1968.

Every five years since 1970, the Parties to the NPT have held a Review Conference in order to review the operation of the NPT with a view to assuring that the purposes of the NPT are being realized.

The year 1995 will not only mark the 25th anniversary of the NPT but also a critical step for in its evolution. Article X (2) of the Treaty requires that in 1995, a conference be convened to decide its future. The decision as to the length of extension of the Treaty must be taken by a majority of the Parties to the NPT. Only two options are possible:

- 1) the NPT could be extended for an additional fixed period or periods; or
- 2) the NPT could continue in force indefinitely.

Canada strongly supports the indefinite extension of the NPT in unamended form as the other option does not unambiguously conserve the NPT and the benefits it supplies. The Canadian position have been expressed and reiterated on many occasions, more recently during Prime Minister Campbell's address to the 48th United Nations General Assembly in New York on September 29, 1993. Canada believes that the 1995 NPT Review Conference should focus exclusively on the extension of the NPT and progress on this issue should not be linked to reform of the substantive provisions of the Treaty.

Before the 1995 NPT Extension Conference, which will be held in New York in April 1995, at least four Preparatory Conferences (PrepComs) will be necessary for the preparation of the appropriate documents and their review as