

Mr. Chairman,

I should like to take this opportunity to express the views of the Canadian Government on the important document now before us, namely the Draft Declaration on the Human Environment.

We regret that it has not been possible to reach agreement on every issue raised during the discussions on the draft declaration. We particularly regret that it was not possible to reach agreement on matters as important as the duty of states to inform one another concerning their activities on developments within their jurisdiction which might have an environmental impact in areas beyond their jurisdiction, and the overwhelming need to spare man and his environment from the potentially catastrophic effects of nuclear weapons tests. Nevertheless, it is our considered view that the draft declaration represents a major achievement. It reflects an interdisciplinary approach to the problems of the human environment and points the way in clear and unmistakable terms to the direction we must follow if man is to survive as a species.

When we spoke on this matter in plenary at the time we were debating the setting up of a working group to consider the draft declaration, we pointed out that the document we were considering was more than a plea for cooperative action, it was more than an inspirational message, it was more than an educational vehicle. It was our view that the draft declaration then under consideration represented nothing less than the first essential step in developing international environmental law.

Mr. Chairman, if the draft declaration reflected such considerations before its intensive study and debate in the working group, it does so even more now, for the declaration has been broadened in many important respects and, equally important, now represents a wider consensus on a larger number of issues.

I shall now summarize briefly the view of the Canadian delegation concerning the concepts embodied in the draft declaration.

We consider that there is a fundamental need for an environment which permits the fullest enjoyment of the basic human rights reflected in the universal declaration of human rights including, in particular, the right to life itself. This concept is reflected in the draft.

We recognize that life on the planet Earth is dependent on the land, the earth, the water and the sun and upon other forms of life on Earth. This concept is reflected in the draft.

We are aware that human life is also dependent upon the maintenance of the ecological balance of the biosphere. This