

Mr. Chairman:

As you have underlined, this Conference faces a daunting challenge and we all must be determined to succeed, despite the thread of pessimism that runs through all discussions of this topic. What are our goals? I don't think that anyone expects us to resolve the crisis in two days. We pray for -- and work for -- a durable cease-fire. That may be unrealistic this week, but what we can achieve, with determination and political will, is the intensification of a peace process with a real chance of success.

Leaders in the former Yugoslavia have not responded to the efforts of regional organizations to help resolve the crisis. We are here, therefore, in a context which includes the broader international community and reflects its determination to see this crisis ended.

Canada, among others, has tried to make a meaningful contribution to resolving the crisis in the former Yugoslavia, through peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and monitoring missions. But, as with other members of this Conference, Canada has been horrified and frustrated by the failure of the parties, particularly but not exclusively Serbians, to stop the senseless killing.

Our citizens are angry. They are outraged by the acts of barbarism. They are offended by the farce of endless cease-fires; of agreements cynically reached and violated; of promises made and broken. Their hearts go out to the civilians directly affected; their disgust with leadership that allows this to continue grows daily.

Representatives here, today, are charged with a heavy responsibility. Time has run out. This may be the last chance to avoid a disaster of even more tragic dimensions. There is no room in this conference for those who are not prepared to participate in good faith and who are not motivated by a sincere desire to bring this tragedy to an end.

There can be no possibility of success unless each of us shares sincerely the objectives of this meeting. We all must be prepared to make it work.

We must stop the killing. Already, too many lives have been lost, too many homes shattered, too many people put to flight. In human terms, the costs have been unspeakable. The warring parties themselves must agree to lay down their arms. The responsibility for ensuring that this happens rests directly with the political and military leaders of communities in Bosnia, Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia. There must be a general cease-fire.

We are all painfully aware that previous cease-fires have failed to hold. While leaders meet and reach agreement, the killing continues and the hideous process of "ethnic cleansing" goes on. This is dreadfully wrong.