

as "expeditiously as possible" or even, sometimes, that they are receiving more prompt attention than before Helsinki. We still note that in some countries information about procedures for applying for visas to travel abroad is not readily available to those who may wish it, and that the reasons for refusing to issue visas are not always forthcoming. In several countries we detect what appears to be a tendency to refuse to permit all members of a family to travel abroad together. Surely, Mr. Chairman, this practice is not in the spirit of the Final Act. In other cases we observe that the fees charged in connection with these applications are not at a moderate level — when a visa can cost more than the average monthly wage in a country — or that successful applicants may be required to reimburse their governments for a university education before they can depart.

The Canadian Government is particularly concerned with the questions of contacts and regular meetings on the basis of family ties and the reunification of families. This is because these issues directly affect the lives of thousands of Canadians, many of whom have come to Canada in recent years and wish to be reunited with other members of their family — surely one of the most basic human aspirations and deserving to be treated in the most generous and humane spirit by the governments of all participating states. While we are pleased to note that increasing numbers of people from the participating states are being permitted by their governments to meet and reunite with their families in Canada and that some procedural improvements have been effected, we cannot overlook that these people are often still faced with slow and discriminatory exit procedures and that they and their families sometimes experience disadvantages because they have applied for visas to travel abroad or emigrate for family reasons. We hope that, as a result of our deliberations here, participating states will resolve to adopt a standard of conduct which would overcome these obstacles through a more expeditious, just and financially less-onerous means of dealing with applications — thus reflecting the humanitarian and positive spirit of the Final Act.

If we can achieve only one thing at this present meeting, my delegation would express the hope that it would be to ensure a greater degree of automaticity, surrounded by a greater awareness of the fact that we are dealing with human beings and not statistics, in addressing our efforts towards the continuing resolution of problems in the human contacts field.

Above all, we must not be dazzled or fooled by statistics. We can take pride and satisfaction from evidence that, for example, nine out of ten outstanding cases may have been resolved, but that is not, in the end, the point. The fact that one case may remain constitutes a continuing measure of our failure in just as important a sense as the nine resolved cases bear