



### Third UN Special Session on Disarmament

The United Nations General Assembly decided to hold a Third Special Session devoted to Disarmament (UNSSOD III) from May 31 to June 25, 1988, at the UN headquarters in New York. As was the case with the First and Second Special Sessions on Disarmament, in 1978 and 1982, respectively, UNSSOD III will be a high-profile international event attended by a number of Heads of State and Government and many Foreign Ministers.

Canada attaches high priority to a successful UNSSOD III in line with its commitment to the multilateral dimension of the arms control and disarmament process, including, in particular, the role of the United Nations. In pursuing its major objectives in this field, Canada takes the view that the UN can and should enhance and complement ongoing efforts in other arms control and disarmament forums including at the bilateral level.

Canada participated in four international preparatory meetings for UNSSOD III where an exchange of views took place and an agenda for the Special Session was established. Canada considers the agenda to be reasonably concise, well-balanced and forward-looking; in sum, a good starting point for UNSSOD III. Participants were, however, unable to reach agreement on more detailed directions for the Special Session.

The main tasks set out for the Special Session include:

- (a) a review and appraisal of the present international situation;
- (b) assessment of the implementation of the decisions of UNSSOD I and UNSSOD II;
- (c) consideration and adoption of the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament;
- (d) assessment of developments and trends, including qualitative and quantitative aspects relevant to the disarmament process;

(e) consideration of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament; and

(f) the relationship between disarmament and development.

Canada conveyed its views to the UN Secretary-General last year concerning the desired areas of focus of UNSSOD III. These include *inter alia*: encouragement of the continuation of meaningful negotiations between the superpowers concerning the limitation and radical reduction of nuclear weapons and the enhancement of strategic stability; recognition of the importance of confidence-building measures in creating the climate necessary for the successful conclusion of arms control and disarmament agreements; the importance of compliance and transparency in the development and implementation of meaningful arms control agreements, and of the essential role of effective verification in that regard; enhanced efforts in the area of nuclear disarmament including the achievement of a cessation of nuclear testing; strengthening of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime; reduction of levels of conventional armaments with special emphasis on the importance of regional approaches; the need to conclude a multilateral convention on chemical weapons; the prevention of an arms race in outer space; and the importance of disarmament and development as distinct processes which both benefit from and contribute to security.

...Throughout the preparatory meetings and in consultations with other governments, Canada has endeavoured to develop a pragmatic and realistic approach to UNSSOD III which emphasizes the importance of searching for common ground. An important stage of the Canadian preparations involved a special meeting of the Consultative Group on Arms Control and Disarmament Affairs on April 14-16, 1988. The meeting focused on UNSSOD III and the Canadian approach. Members of the Consultative Group were able to examine in considerable detail, over the course of two full days, the key agenda items for UNSSOD III and to formulate

their own priorities and preferences concerning Canadian objectives. These suggestions and proposals received from the Consultative Group will be among the key inputs during the final stages of deciding Canada's policy priorities for UNSSOD III.

Canada takes the view that UNSSOD III will succeed if it avoids focusing on perceived past failures and instead emphasizes constructive consideration of measures which might make concrete contributions to the arms control and disarmament process. A successful outcome should reinforce the validity of the practical, step-by-step approach to this process, without which the prospects for real progress could be dim.

### Positive Developments After Stockholm

The provisions of the Final Document of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, which was to become officially known by the unwieldy title of the CCSBMDE, came into effect on January 1, 1987. The Document was the result of negotiations among the 35 nations of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) which resulted in a series of provisions designed to enhance the transparency of and increase confidence in the conduct of military activities in Europe. Among other things, the implementation of these provisions during their first year has resulted in Canadian observers attending Soviet military exercises, Polish observers having access to American exercises in the Federal Republic of Germany, and British personnel conducting an on-site challenge inspection in the German Democratic Republic.

The Stockholm Conference itself was established by the Madrid Follow-Up Meeting of the CSCE as a full-fledged diplomatic conference with a specific negotiating mandate and unlimited duration. The Stockholm Conference in fact met for two years, from January 1984