

Preface

For a number of years prior to 1985, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and its predecessor organizations have recognized the importance of outer space. It was, however, only on 29 March 1985 that the CD succeeded in reaching agreement on a mandate for an ad hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. This development was welcomed by Canada and other member nations as a first step toward an organized examination of the subject. This process is in accordance with the United Nations General Assembly resolution which was adopted without dissent during its 39th session on December 12, 1984 and which called upon the CD to consider the question of preventing an arms race in outer space as a matter of priority. The mandate now adopted by the CD is a realistic one. It is neither narrow nor restricted but permits the CD to begin some action and undertake concrete work almost immediately.

The ad hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space established under the mandate, is "to examine, as a first step at this stage, through substantive and general consideration, issues relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space". In the process, it should take into account all existing agreements, existing proposals and future initiatives, then report on the progress of its work to the Conference on Disarmament in August, 1985.

From the Canadian perspective, the creation of the ad hoc Committee on outer space is in line with Canada's expressed policy and constitutes a significant step forward in coming to grips with the subject. The mandate of the ad hoc Committee both complements and accurately reflects the realities concerning the bilateral negotiations already underway between the United States and the Soviet Union in Geneva. It neither undermines, prejudices nor in any way interferes with those negotiations and this fact is considered by Canada to be absolutely central to the successful process of both sets of deliberations.

On 26 August 1982, Canada submitted its first substantive working paper to the CD on the outer space issue. That document entitled "Arms Control and Outer Space" (CD/320) undertook to discuss generally the subject of arms control and outer space in terms of stabilizing and destabilizing characteristics. With the establishment