

Such a measure would be directed primarily towards qualitative aspects of military developments. The quantitative dimension is also important. In this connection, it is a matter for dismay that so few countries use the existing reporting matrix for filing information on their military expenditures. At a time when there appears to be rising understanding of the benefits for security and stability of increased openness on military matters, the special session should urge all countries to make use of this reporting mechanism which is already available to us. The open exchange of this information would be an invaluable confidence-building measure. There should also be further serious consideration, perhaps under the auspices of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, of the feasibility of an effective register of international arms transfers.

Future developments and trends in relation to weapons systems which already exist, particularly weapons of mass destruction, are also a matter for concern.

Nuclear arsenals, as they now exist, continue to be widely regarded as constituting the most serious threat to the future of mankind. The two leading nuclear Powers in their recent agreements seem at last to have taken the first step towards real nuclear disarmament. This amounts to an epochal turning-point in the arms control and disarmament process. The momentum of that process must be maintained.

Like many others here, Canada supports the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban as a fundamental arms control objective. The First Special Session foresaw such a comprehensive test ban as having value "within the framework of an effective nuclear disarmament process". Encouragingly, this logic has been reflected in the fact of the two leading nuclear Powers having entered into negotiations on nuclear-test limits simultaneously with their negotiation of agreements to eliminate or reduce certain nuclear-weapons systems. Participants at the Third Special Session should register their support for continuance of this step-by-step approach to a comprehensive test ban.

For many years, a central obstacle to a comprehensive test ban was doubt that such an agreement could be adequately verified. Under the auspices of the Conference on Disarmament, much useful work has been done in defining and clarifying the verification requirements for a test ban. Ongoing technological developments, particularly in the area of seismic detection, have also greatly improved the prospects for effective verification. The Conference on Disarmament must continue this work and commence as soon as feasible the negotiation of a multilateral treaty to ban nuclear tests.

The process of nuclear-arms reductions which has now been initiated by the two leading nuclear Powers underlines the importance of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons beyond the five acknowledged nuclear Powers. The fact that several countries, including several reported to have acquired or to be seeking to acquire a nuclear-weapons capability, have neither adhered to the non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) nor placed their nuclear programmes under international safeguards administered by the International Atomic Energy Agency, is cause for great concern. The Third Special Session should call on such States to take early action