

NPT 1995 EXTENSION CONFERENCE

Since its entry into force on March 5, 1970, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has constituted the cornerstone of the world's non-proliferation system. It provides a political and legal barrier to the legitimization of additional nuclear weapons, the legal foundation for the commerce in nuclear equipment, material and technology as well as the basic commitments to be verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Safeguards System. More than 150 States have ratified the NPT since its signature in 1968.

Every five years since 1970, the Parties to the NPT have held a Review Conference in order to review the operation of the NPT with a view to assuring that the purposes of the NPT are being realized.

The year 1995 will not only mark the 25th anniversary of the NPT but also a critical step in its evolution. Article X (2) of the Treaty requires that a conference be held in 1995 at which a majority of the parties to the NPT are to decide on any extension of the Treaty. Article X (2) provides for only three possible extension options:

- 1) The NPT could be extended indefinitely.
- 2) The NPT could be extended for an additional fixed period.
- 3) The NPT could be extended for additional fixed periods.

Canada strongly supports the indefinite extension of the NPT in unamended form as the other options do not unambiguously conserve the NPT and the benefits it supplies. The Canadian position has been expressed and reiterated on many occasions, more recently during André Ouellet's address to the 49th United Nations General Assembly in New York on September 29, 1994. Canada believes that the 1995 NPT Review Conference should focus exclusively on the extension of the NPT and progress on this issue should not be linked to reform of the substantive provisions of the Treaty.