

Mr. Chairman:

We are gathered here to review the world's most successful security treaty and to make an historic decision on its future.

These would be daunting responsibilities, were it not for the fact that we are not starting from scratch. The backdrop to our deliberations is the growing global consensus in favour of stopping nuclear proliferation and undertaking nuclear disarmament.

This meeting will give us the opportunity to deal with continuing instability and uncertainty in the world, including tragic regional tensions and conflicts, which make the existence of the NPT [Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty] even more important.

In signing the NPT, 176 countries have already declared their commitment to the global norms and principles the Treaty upholds.

Our ultimate goal is universalization of the Treaty. This is why Canada wants to transform this commitment into a permanent reality. We should indefinitely and unconditionally extend the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

As we undertake our work, the real challenge will be to keep our common goal - the strengthening of the global non-proliferation system - firmly and clearly in mind, and to let nothing interfere with our commitment to making the world a safer place.

We must be ever-conscious of the fact that we have been given the responsibility by our publics to make a decision not only on their behalf, but also on behalf of future generations. Our decision will directly affect the security and well-being of the people of the world well into the next century.

Canada believes that the global public should be able to enter the 21st century with a sense of hope, excitement and anticipation. We have a profound responsibility to act in the interests of the world. This historic decision - in favour of indefinite extension - is ours to make.

### **The Canadian Context**

Canada's approach to this meeting is shaped by several realities:

First, we come to the nuclear non-proliferation debate with a wide background of technical and political experience. We were a partner in the Manhattan Project. Early on, Canada made a deliberate political decision not to use our technical expertise and capabilities to make nuclear weapons.