

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOE CLARK,  
MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
(CHAIRMAN):

Colleagues, may I call to order the first session of the Open Skies negotiations.

It is with a great deal of pleasure that I invite the Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, to give the welcoming address and to declare the meeting open.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE BRIAN MULRONEY, PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA:

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome and bienvenue au Canada. I am pleased to welcome you to Canada for this Conference of Open Skies.

We are living in remarkable years in world history. The Berlin Wall is down, Nelson Mandela is free, and a new age is born.

Throughout Eastern Europe governments are grappling with the unfamiliar challenges of democracy and economic change. They are trying to accomplish in months what it has taken others decades, and even centuries, to achieve.

It is not a small dream to carry out the dreams of a nation which are required by a democratic government and, at the same time, to answer the expectations of the citizens who wish, for themselves and for their children, to have access to new prosperity. You need time, patience, and a great resolve.

Nobody, as far as I know, has the necessary experience to prescribe a way to certain success for these governments which would make it possible for them to avoid either great national difficulties or considerable individual sacrifice. New national structures and economies are built slowly and with difficulties, but all nations have a stake in the success of the new governments and an interest in responding constructively to their needs.

Canada stands ready to do its part. Fully 15 per cent of Canadians have their origins in central and eastern Europe. These Canadians are schooled in the management of government in a bilingual nation and a multicultural society, and they are experienced in the conduct of international business in a free enterprise world. Canada is committed to co-operate in the rebuilding of Eastern Europe. Canada is also ready to play its part in building a new international order.

For almost half a century there has been half a peace, based on distrust and built on deterrents. Confidence was impossible while basic values were in conflict.

But the confrontation of ideologies has at last subsided. We