

We need the commitment of all states if we are to make progress. We should examine the potential developmental benefits of disarmament measures. These can include redirecting spending to social purposes; reducing public debts; stimulating economic growth, trade and private investment; and increasing official development assistance.

We should emphasize the importance of cooperation at the regional level, and the necessity of supporting existing global and regional institutions which promote cooperation. The conference document should support current arms control and disarmament negotiations, and acknowledge the necessity of confidence-building measures in that context.

Finally, the protection of individual rights and freedoms is so basic to both disarmament and development that it is often overlooked. The individual has a key role to play in these processes, but must be provided freedom and opportunity to become involved. In this context, I welcome the attendance of so many non-governmental observers here. My delegation will follow closely their contributions to the conference.

The final document should be brief and consistent. We should keep our objectives clearly in view as the conference proceeds. Canada has approached the draft document, as transmitted, with an open mind, although we believe that certain parts will require substantial modification if we want consensus. We hope that others will have an equally strong commitment to making this conference work.

If we are to succeed, the United Nations must deal effectively with the distortions that scar human life on this planet, distortions that mean that one person in six lives in abject poverty, while arms expenditures rise.

This contrast is highlighted frequently by respected studies such as those on world military and social expenditures produced by Ruth Leger Sivard and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, among others. It is highlighted even more starkly by the poverty and suffering I have encountered during visits to development projects in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America.

One useful purpose of this conference could be to return the global spotlight to the costs of the continuing arms race. But spotlights aren't enough. We need practical solutions to enable us to devote fewer resources to weapons and more to development. Security in the interdependent world of today demands both disarmament and development.