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COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF THE  
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Working Group II  
Agenda items 12 and 15

ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENTS AND TRENDS, INCLUDING QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE ASPECTS, RELEVANT TO THE DISARMAMENT PROCESS, WITH A VIEW TO THE ELABORATION OF APPROPRIATE CONCRETE AND PRACTICAL MEASURES AND, IF NECESSARY ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES, TAKING DULY INTO ACCOUNT THE PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES ESTABLISHED IN THE FINAL DOCUMENT OF THE TENTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, THE FIRST SPECIAL SESSION DEVOTED TO DISARMAMENT

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT,  
IN THE LIGHT OF THE ACTION PROGRAMME ADOPTED AT  
THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Working paper submitted by Canada

Experience has demonstrated that in attempting to anticipate and shape the future, we are prone simply to extrapolate from past trends and concerns. This can lead to serious, and sometimes costly, miscalculations about future developments. Assessing the qualitative as well as quantitative aspects of developments and trends relevant to the disarmament process is especially difficult because military capabilities are being rapidly transformed by the rampant pace of technological change which characterizes our age. It is precisely for this reason that our publics are increasingly and properly concerned that the application of new technologies to military purposes not occur in unthinking, uncontrolled ways. The modernization of weapons systems should not be the result of blind technological imperatives. It should be subject to clear policy guidance, designed to ensure that new technology is applied in ways which enhance and strengthen, rather than undermine, international peace and security.

In both qualitative and quantitative aspects, there are two major and distinct dimensions: the development of new weapons systems as the result of new technological applications; and the dissemination to increasing numbers of countries and regions of ever more modern and sophisticated weapons systems, as well as the capability for their production.