

The Minister declared, however, that "whether or not Canada extends financial assistance in the nuclear field, Canada will provide nuclear material, equipment and technology to other countries only on the basis of binding commitments that Canadian supplies will not serve the development of any nuclear explosive device for whatever purpose. This policy will apply equally to all countries. Canada is determined that its nuclear assistance must not contribute to the manufacture of explosive devices".

The Minister stressed the vital importance of promoting a stronger international safeguards system. The IAEA's verification of safeguards commitments of the non-nuclear weapon states parties to the Treaty was perhaps the most successful aspect of the Treaty. "As more and more non-nuclear weapon states parties to the Treaty develop nuclear energy capacities", said Mr. MacEachen, "the more important will be the role of IAEA safeguards applied in these states. These safeguards serve as a reassurance to neighbours and cooperating states alike that nuclear energy is not being diverted to the manufacture of nuclear explosive devices".

The nuclear weapon states party to the NPT should demonstrate their support for the purposes of the Treaty by accepting safeguards themselves, Mr. MacEachen said. He urged the USSR to join with the USA and the UK in their offer to place their peaceful nuclear activities under safeguards. He hoped this would be followed by a halt in the production of fissile material for military purposes.

The Minister noted that the increased production of fissile materials in nuclear power reactors throughout the world and increased transport of such materials had raised concerns about their possible theft and use to threaten governments and societies. He called on the Conference to encourage further international action to deal with the danger.

The peaceful application of nuclear explosions had been a controversial question, Mr. MacEachen said. Canadian Government experts had concluded that there is little promise for the practical application of nuclear explosions to resource extraction or engineering projects in Canada for at least a decade. He said Canada would like to see a halt to experimentation in this area "at least until a thorough re-evaluation of the world's resources and energy needs presents a more compelling case for the use of peaceful nuclear explosions".

Mr. MacEachen went on to say that if governments believed that peaceful nuclear explosion experiments should continue "it will be necessary to assess the need for a more formal international regime for peaceful nuclear explosions". However, such a regime would have to ensure that any benefits from such experiments would be available to all non-nuclear weapon states by way of services provided by nuclear weapon states; that nuclear weapon powers would give notice of and report on peaceful nuclear explosions on their own territories and that such explosions would not contribute to the development of nuclear weapons.