

First, we consider it essential that there be a full and impartial inquiry into the incident to determine all the relevant facts and circumstances. This will demand the complete and open co-operation not only of those states directly involved in this tragic incident, but also of those like Canada who have a deep humanitarian concern, whether stemming from the deaths of their own citizens or more broadly based on their basic respect for human values. We consider that the UN Secretary-General is best placed to carry out this function and that it should be completed as rapidly as possible. The Secretary-General should be asked to report back to the Council as a matter of the utmost urgency.

Second, we consider that the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), in co-operation with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, should be requested to carry out an urgent and thorough investigation of the incident with a view to making recommendations for the improvement of international civil aviation regulations and practices which will preclude ever again the repetition of such an incident.

We assume that the government of the Soviet Union will co-operate fully with this investigation. If this incident were only a tragic accident, the Soviet Union would be required under the Chicago Convention to carry out its own investigation. Since this catastrophe was the result of a deliberate act, it is even more compelling upon the Soviet Union to facilitate the ICAO investigation in every way.

Third, and as an interim measure pending the outcome of this inquiry and review of international civil aviation regulations and practices, we consider that the Soviet Union should be called upon, for urgent humanitarian reasons, to pay immediate compensation to the families of the victims in a full and generous manner. I could recall precedents for the voluntary payment of prompt compensation in similar circumstances. This process, where necessary, can be facilitated and assisted by organs such as the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The Canadian government offers these suggestions, in the hope that they may facilitate not only the debate on which we are now embarked but also additional endeavours to be undertaken elsewhere in the United Nations system and, I hope, by the author of this horrible tragedy. This Council must ensure that this will be the last such incident to arouse universal indignation.

The consideration of this grave situation must not be animated by any desire for polemics, but rather by what should be our common concern for life and safety. We trust, therefore, that the deliberations of this Council, and the effective action it must take, will not be frustrated by the exercise of the veto. Any such tactic would be unconscionable and would be widely — and rightly — interpreted as a tacit admission of culpability.

---

S/C