

Mr. Chairman, it is most appropriate that we should now be meeting in Madrid. Spain was first to respond to the Finnish initiative to convene the Helsinki consultations, the original move which really began the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). Our Spanish hosts played an active and most positive role in those consultations and in the later stages of the Conference. They have been at the forefront of the long and arduous negotiations required to draw up working arrangements for this present meeting, and have time and again demonstrated their deep commitment to the CSCE process. My Delegation also has reported to me in glowing terms on the excellent facilities our host government has provided, and on the generous courtesies they have extended. It is an honour and a pleasure to be in Madrid and to observe this at first hand. On behalf of my Government, I wish to extend deepest thanks to our hosts.

In July and August 1975 when the leaders of our countries met in Helsinki to sign the Final Act, hopes were high that we had made a creative and lasting contribution to détente in Europe and to world peace. Since then, and indeed in most recent times, those hopes have somewhat dimmed. Nevertheless, Mr. Chairman, Canada remains firmly convinced that the CSCE can be a forum of real value and that the Final Act sets out rules of conduct and standards of behaviour which, if truly observed, could bring great benefit to the people of all our countries.

I think it reasonable to say that, despite serious set-backs, the world is a better place for the conclusion of the Final Act of Helsinki in 1975. We have all no doubt fallen short of the standards which it established and have not fulfilled its objectives to the degree we might have done. Nevertheless, we have over the past five years seen important developments in co-operation between participating states through economic, scientific, cultural and other exchanges. These have unquestionably enriched life for our people and have widened the horizons of our governments. There has been, too, some improvement in the freedom of individuals to move about, across the borders of our states, in their lawful pursuits. There has been a recognition that, with all due respect for national sovereignty, no state is an island unto itself, able to conduct its affairs, either internal or external, in complete disregard of its neighbours. As in everything else in human endeavour, however, practice is not perfect. If I speak now more of the short-comings which need to be remedied, it is because we should set for ourselves a high standard of behaviour and compliance with the international obligations freely entered into, in adopting the Helsinki Final Act. We are here