

It soon became evident that the main dynamic of UNSSOD III would be played out along North/South, rather than East/West lines. The themes covered in the statement by Zimbabwean President Mugabe, on behalf of members of the Non-Aligned, were reflected in the majority of interventions by members of that group. Mr. Mugabe placed a heavy emphasis on nuclear (as opposed to conventional) weapons issues and blamed the superpowers for the arms race. Other major Non-Aligned themes included the need for follow-up to the September 1987 Disarmament and Development Conference (some advocated the establishment of a fund to transfer resources), the establishment of zones of peace and NWFZs, the total elimination of nuclear weapons, agreement on negative security assurances and criticism of nuclear cooperation with South Africa and Israel. Many also expressed support for the Six Nation initiative to establish an "integrated verification system" within the UN, which bore some similarities to the Canada/Netherlands proposal.

Western countries called attention to the importance of achieving a concise concluding document with the emphasis on progress achieved in ACD since UNSSOD I and the need to define future priorities. They also stressed the importance of practical approaches to ACD based on the development of confidence, openness and transparency, and the essential role of verification. The need for the expansion and strengthening of the non-proliferation régime based on the NPT and for conventional arms control were also major themes.

The East Bloc countries put forward a range of proposals, including the earlier Soviet concept of "a comprehensive system of international peace and security". However, anti-Western rhetoric, which had characterized East Bloc positions at UNSSOD III, was largely absent.

Working Group I (Review and Assessment):

The Committee of the Whole (COW) of the Special Session established three working groups on the substantive agenda items which were allowed one week to complete their work. Working Group I was chaired by the Bahamian Permanent Representative in New York, Ambassador Hepburn. A positive atmosphere, relatively free from polemics, prevailed. Following the general debate, during which Canada made a major substantive intervention (subsequently tabled as an official conference document), the discussion focused on the structure and substance of the working group's report to the COW. Interpretations of what constituted an appropriate balance for this report, however, varied considerably. On