

the progress achieved since the NPT Review Conference. Canada recognizes that the NPT is not a perfect instrument. Nevertheless, it must be borne firmly in mind that, whatever its weaknesses, the treaty's objectives are as valid today as they were when it was concluded. We agree with the many states which deeply regret that more has not been done to reinforce it.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the non-proliferation system is as much in the interest of non-nuclear-weapon states as of nuclear-weapon states. It is as much in the interest of developing countries as of developed countries. The non-proliferation system has the cardinal value of sparing non-nuclear-weapon states the diversion of economic and human resources to non-productive and potentially destructive ends.

Although first priority must be given to checking the growth and averting the spread of nuclear arms, we must seek and exploit every opportunity to curb the growth and use of other weapons. For three decades we have been spared a nuclear war, but conventional arms have continued to exact an appalling toll in life, suffering and material destruction. The international arms trade has reached mammoth proportions, and continues to devour vast resources urgently needed for productive economic and social purposes throughout the world. The need to check the growth and spread of conventional arms has been largely ignored in disarmament forums. Concerted international action is urgently required among both suppliers and recipients to check the growth in the arms trade. As other members of this Assembly have already suggested, it might be particularly fruitful to approach this problem at the regional level.

The Vienna negotiations for mutual and balanced force reductions in Central Europe offer the prospect of significant steps in disarmament and the reduction of the danger of confrontation at the regional level. Unfortunately, progress has been slow and the negotiations are now about to enter their fourth year with little measurable achievement yet in sight. Canada attaches high priority to MBFR and, in that forum as in others, will continue to work for the achievement of meaningful measures of disarmament and the improvement of mutual confidence.

It is particularly timely that, in the middle of the Disarmament Decade, we are reviewing the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. Canada fully supports the search for ways of enabling the UN to carry out this role more effectively. We have participated in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee established last year to undertake this review, and we are prepared to endorse its report. The United Nations remains the principal forum in which to focus world

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