

Mr. Chairman,

In the recent Canadian statement in the general debate, our delegation stressed the view that important UNESCO decisions ought to be able to command the support of all the important groups within this assembly, at least sufficiently to receive their tacit acceptance. We believe that, in its present form, this clearly would not be the case with respect to the substance of this item, for a variety of reasons which have already been pointed out.

It had been our original intention to intervene only very briefly in this debate, simply to draw attention to the fact that this is a matter in which we believe a consensual approach is necessary and to suggest that this Commission is not the proper forum in which to tackle the substance of the draft.

However, a number of statements were made in the course of yesterday's prolonged procedural discussions on which I now wish to comment. First of all, there were the allegations, advanced by various supporters of the Soviet-Iraq draft resolution, that the draft declaration in its present form has gained broad support. That, of course, is simply not true. Representatives of only 41 member states have approved this text, whereas, of the remaining 99 member states of this Organization, more than 50 (well over half) were not even present at the Paris meeting, while the remainder, which were represented, either did not vote on it at all or voted against it, with the exception of 3 which abstained. Second, there were the suggestions that this declaration was not in fact either controversial or divisive, suggestions which I believe the relevant intervention of the distinguished representative of France effectively countered in general terms. Here I would like to make the Canadian position quite clear. Again, in a general statement to Plenary, we pointed out that certain initiatives taken at general conferences and in other meetings of UNESCO have run up against beliefs strongly held by Canadians on human rights, on the role of the state in society and on freedom of expression. That reference was directed towards the draft declaration which, in its present form, simply is not acceptable to Canada and could not be endorsed by us.

This is true both of the underlying philosophical approach, which we regard as favouring state control and more particularly with specific elements in the draft. These include preambulatory paragraph 5 with its totally unacceptable reference to UNGA 3379 XXX and operative paragraphs VIII, X and XII. We believe the scope of VIII