

I would first of all like to welcome you to Montreal and to Quebec la belle province. To those of you who are in this city, and perhaps in Canada, for the first time, I hope you enjoy your stay with us and will be able to return again to enjoy our hospitality.

I bring you greetings from the Government of Canada and particularly from the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, who is travelling in the United States on official business and could not be here with us.

I am pleased that so many delegations from the Conference on Disarmament (CD), observer delegations to the CD, other official representatives of countries at the CD, and technical experts in this area, could attend our deliberations this weekend. Your positive response to the Canadian Government's invitation attests to the willingness of your Governments to consider further the critical issue of how best to prevent an arms race in outer space.

The Government of Canada welcomes your interest and shares your concerns.

As Canada's Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney has affirmed, "I approach the pursuit of peace with determination, recognizing both the enormity of the task, and the requirement for action. To those who say it can't be done, I say it must be done. To those who say Canada can't do it alone, I say we can do it together. And to those who claim it is none of our business, I say the search for peace is everyone's business".

One could say without exaggeration that the whole question of the future use of outer space is among the most difficult issues on the arms control and disarmament agenda, and is one that must be dealt with in a serious and constructive fashion by all Governments. The first Sputnik launch in 1957 created an international awareness of outer space as a theatre of exploration, research and discovery as man has sought to push out beyond the confines of his own planet. We have since witnessed many remarkable achievements in space research and exploration, such as the United States mission to the moon in 1969, which was, in the words of the U.S. astronaut Neil Armstrong, a "small step for man, a giant leap for mankind," and the Soviet-led, international effort, known as the Venus-Halley or Vega project, that studied the famous Halley's Comet in 1986.

We have also seen major advances in the peaceful use of space, for telecommunications purposes, telephone and television transmission, sophisticated mapping for agricultural and other purposes linked to international development. Search and rescue operations are also a good example of East-West cooperation in space, through the COSPAS-SARSAT system.