

Mr. Chairman,

Since the United Nations Disarmament Commission of 1986, prospects for real, substantial progress in the field of arms control and disarmament agreements have brightened considerably.

The leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland last autumn achieved results that were recognized as having set the stage for future progress -- by governments in their national statements and by our delegations during meetings of the UNGA 41 First Committee. President Reagan and General-Secretary Gorbachev revealed their determination to lessen the chances of a world war, particularly a nuclear war. The two superpower leaders established a firm base for the bilateral negotiations ongoing in Geneva.

It is the firm hope of the government and people of Canada that the two superpowers will soon reach an agreement to eliminate or limit severely certain types of nuclear weapons and that they will then move to considering actively reductions in other nuclear and conventional forces. The two superpowers have clearly made progress and the time for an agreement is now. Differences still remaining in the ongoing negotiations and discussions should be quickly resolved in the interests of transforming the spirit of Reykjavik into action.

As noted by the Right Honourable Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs in a statement to the House of Commons on 21 October 1986, "At Reykjavik three lessons were reinforced. The first two are: both sides are serious; and arms control is possible. But the third lesson is that arms control will not come easily. It is a deliberate and difficult process."

Our task here at UNDC 87 is to advance that deliberate and difficult process.

On 22 September 1986, the Stockholm Conference came to an end and presented to the world a remarkable document on confidence and security-building in Europe.

These two positive events, Reykjavik and Stockholm, were followed by a fruitful session of the UNGA 41 First Committee which exhibited a tendency toward consensus, compromise and accommodation.

Further, over the past months, the Conference on Disarmament has been making such progress as to lead one to hope that the 40 countries there engaged in multilateral arms control and disarmament negotiations may reach agreement soon on a chemical weapons treaty.