

Mr. Chairman:

I am glad to have this opportunity of expressing the support of my Government for the agenda which has been suggested by my distinguished Belgian colleague. We consider that this reflects a reasonable and practical approach which we believe, from the consultations which have been going on over recent months, corresponds to the subject matter with which most people would expect the proposed conference to deal.

We also wish to support the concept of a close relationship between the agenda as proposed and the draft mandates submitted by Belgium, Italy and Denmark. The elaboration of clear mandates or terms of reference for the bodies which will, in the second phase of the conference, be responsible for the detailed examination of the agenda is a practical expression of what we have meant by careful and adequate preparation for the conference. We feel that agreement to such terms of reference will be essential to the establishment of the kind of understanding by all sides which must precede a decision to convoke the conference. We doubt that the elements in these documents will come as a surprise, since it is our impression that they have already been touched on and discussed in bilateral and multilateral consultations which have taken place between the countries here represented over the past several months.

Canada has a particular interest in, and attaches particular importance to, the work of the committee which we propose should be set up to deal with the third item of the agenda as outlined by our Belgian colleague. We wish to associate Canada in the closest way possible with the proposals made by our Danish colleague. In supporting the Danish submission, I would mention that we consider that the mandate is closely inter-related with the corresponding agenda item proposed by Belgium and should be read together with it. It is our understanding that these terms of reference describe and elaborate the more general words of the agenda item as proposed, as do those of the other mandates.

Progress in this area will doubtless be gradual but we regard it as an essential complement to the other measures which we hope the conference will take to improve security, stability and confidence in Europe. It will not be enough for governments to agree to certain principles designed to guide relations between states, or even for them to expand co-operation between official agencies. The détente process will be incomplete if it does not in some specific way touch the people of our countries. This can be done by providing for practical measures which will progressively reduce barriers to the movement of human beings and information, barriers which today seem more characteristic of an earlier and less happy era.

The interest of Canada in this subject has been expressed on many occasions, the most recent being when the Canadian Government set out its programme to the new Parliament in Canada earlier this month. That statement contained the following passage:

"Multilateral preparatory talks for the long-awaited Conference on European Security and Co-operation are now under way. Canada has urged that the main conference, to which Canada will be a party, give due weight to the questions of freedom of movement of people, of trade, of information and of technology between East and West."