

détente which has been spreading in Europe in recent years. Indeed, one of the symbols of the success of the movement to détente will be the general recognition that it is the duty of all states to make it possible for those families, some of whose members may be unwillingly separated from the others, to be permitted to reunite in places of their own choosing. If this principle is accepted by all states here, there should be no need for them to interpose artificial obstacles of an arbitrary nature. In approaching this question with minds sensitive to human welfare, our countries will be fulfilling the clear intent of the terms of Article 16(3) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states in unequivocal terms that the "family is the natural and fundamental group and unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State". It follows directly from this principle that obstacles to the preservation of this fundamental unit should be identified and removed as a matter of high international policy. It is therefore appropriate that a conference dealing with the problems of Europe should ask the participants, in the interests of improving the human environment which we all share, to examine this question and to identify obstacles to family reunification--for these are at the same time obstacles to understanding between states and peoples. Apart from the duty which is placed upon all our countries to foster the family group as a social and political entity essential to the moral health of nations, the effect of separation on individuals should not be ignored. The poignant distress caused to so many by family divisions can only be an impediment to the understanding, reconciliation and goodwill amongst people without which our other efforts here will be less effective than we would wish.

Apart from stating the important principle that members of the same family should not unwillingly be kept apart, any document which this Conference will produce should also make general suggestions on how states most effectively can achieve this object. Participating states should be encouraged to devise procedures in cases of family reunification which are expeditious and which will bring forth early decisions. Many states require complex documentation for those who are departing, and in many cases make charges for such documentation. We believe that when questions of family reunification or, for that matter, family visits are in question, the amount of such charges should not be excessive and that, in particular, such charges should not be placed upon young children or on the needy. Such documentation should not be exceptional or particularly complex for families as opposed to other travellers. Any obstacles whether they be administrative or financial which are in addition to those normally placed on emigrating individuals or which are imposed following the decision of any authority to grant travel documents would seem to be in contravention of