

The prevention of an arms race in outer space is a high priority for Canada, and this CD agenda item warrants special efforts and attention. As was the case last year, Canada submitted a substantive working paper designed to facilitate consideration of existing relevant international law and the possible need for it to be supplemented by additional negotiated measures. We have also commissioned extensive research into the potential for using existing technology for purposes of space-based verification. We intend in the future to make the results of this research more widely available.

It was a matter of disappointment that a mandate for a subsidiary body on the outer space item was agreed only half way through the 1986 session. As a result, for a second consecutive year, only half of the session's time could be devoted to substantive deliberations. Once the mandate was agreed, the ensuing discussion was on the whole characterized by an impressive sobriety and thoughtfulness. In the Canadian view, the existing mandate is demonstrating its usefulness.

The Conference on Disarmament is also engaged in negotiation aimed at banning radiological weapons, which fortunately are not yet known to exist. My Government recognizes that following the tragic accident at Chernobyl, there are heightened concerns about the potential consequences of attacks on peaceful nuclear facilities. My Government hopes that there can be early agreement on how this issue can most effectively be addressed, so as to avoid prolonged further delay in concluding a radiological weapons ban.

Unfortunately, concrete achievements at the Conference on Disarmament in recent years have been scarce. This may be an indicator not so much of failure as of limits. Delegations at the Conference can achieve no more than what their respective instructions, reflective of perceived national interest and political will, allow. Nevertheless, Canada would join with others in urging a searching re-examination of the methods and procedures whereby the Conference on Disarmament conducts its operations. It would be regrettable, possibly tragic, if opportunities for progress were missed due to institutional inefficiencies or failings.

In conclusion, I am confident Ambassador Beesley can count on the support and cooperation of all Delegations in bringing this year's Conference on Disarmament session efficaciously to its conclusion".