

- Canada hosted two of the six meetings held to date, the most recent being the Cairo meeting of May 1994. This was the second time the group met in the Middle East, the previous meeting having been held in Tunisia in October 1993.
- Canada also participates in the other four working groups. In September 1993, Sydney, Nova Scotia, welcomed a special workshop on Maritime Confidence-Building Measures, under the aegis of the Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group. A similar workshop was held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, from August 29 to September 1, 1994, for high ranking officers of Middle Eastern naval forces. Last July, at the request of the Working Group, Canada led a demonstration of practical Maritime Confidence-Building Measures near Venice off the coast of Italy.
- Meanwhile, in June 1994, Canada hosted Middle Eastern participants at a workshop on the evaluation of the environmental impact of different types of projects.
- Canada is also a member of the Multilateral Steering Group, which reviews the work of the five working groups and plans future meetings. The Group held its most recent meeting in Tunisia last July. It also held an intersessional meeting in Montebello, Quebec, in February 1994.

Canada's Approach

- Canada, with its practical expertise in dealing with such issues as refugees, disarmament and water resource management, its longstanding peacekeeping experience in the Middle East and its positive relations with parties in the region, has contributed significantly to the peace process.
- As one of the non-regional parties participating in the multilateral process, Canada's principal aim has been to keep the global peace process moving forward and to support bilateral agreements. Responsibility for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict ultimately rests with the parties involved in the bilateral negotiations.
- Canada considers, however, that the multilateral negotiations do offer an opportunity for the parties to understand the tangible benefits to be gained from an eventual overall political settlement. The multilateral negotiations have also offered a unique opportunity for the adversaries in the conflict to make the personal contacts needed for progress in bilateral negotiations. It was through such contacts that Israelis and Palestinians initiated the discussions that led to the Peace Accords.