

Mr. Chairman,

The Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada, in his Statement to the First Stage of this Conference, made a strong plea that members of the same family should not remain unwillingly separated because they reside in different states. He said: "The enunciation of principles and the adoption of concrete measures on divided families and like problems would, we believe, substantially improve interstate relations." Canada's particular interest in this subject was further expressed by our Ambassador in Finland in his address to an early session of the Helsinki consultations when he pointed out that there was scarcely a country represented that was not the homeland of some Canadian citizen. For this reason, Canada has a particular and compelling interest in seeing reflected in any final document of this Conference a declaration on the reunification of families.

As with other documents on which we will be working, my Delegation would anticipate that any such declaration on family reunification should have two principal parts: the first, a clear expression of the principle which we wish to establish; and the second, the steps that we consider might be taken to make such a principle more effective in the relations between our respective countries and their peoples. As with other proposals, it should be our purpose to encourage the progressive reduction of barriers to the realization of those general principles we will be enunciating.

During all its history as a sovereign state, Canada has made welcome groups of people from all over Europe. Many who came between the wars, and even earlier, still retain memories of their country of origin. Many came to us as a result of the ebb and flow of populations during and after the Second World War. A number came with the hope that they could act as an advance guard for those of their immediate family that had been left behind. We have already heard from our Danish colleague, with whom I heartily agree, how important it is to reduce barriers in a way that would ensure that these family members can visit one another as they wish. Our particular concern goes farther: we would like to see it accepted that those who wish to move back and forth across frontiers to live with their near relatives may do so with minimal difficulty and in an atmosphere of acceptance and tolerance.

The desire to join one's relations is a natural desire. We should not seek to impute political or economic motives to those who feel the strength of family ties; rather we should look for ways to meet this very human drive for family solidarity in a spirit of co-operation consonant with the atmosphere of