



# communiqué

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## THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT ESTABLISHES AN AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE OUTER SPACE ISSUE

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, is pleased to note that agreement has been reached by the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva to establish an ad hoc committee to deal with the arms control and outer space issue. The 40 nations Conference on Disarmament is the only international multilateral body mandated by the United Nations to negotiate on arms control and disarmament issues.

The ad hoc committee has been tasked in the first instance to identify, through substantive examination, issues relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. It will take into account all existing agreements, existing proposals and future initiatives in preparing its report on the progress of its work to the Conference on Disarmament in August 1985.

From the Canadian perspective, the creation of the ad hoc committee on outer space is in line with Canada's expressed policy and constitutes a significant step forward in coming to grips with the issue. It is in conformity with a resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly without dissent during its 39th session on December 12, 1984, which requested the Conference on Disarmament to consider as a matter of priority the question of preventing an arms race in outer space. Canada has been a strong and consistent supporter of such an outer space resolution in the United Nations and elsewhere.

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The mandate of the ad hoc committee both complements and accurately reflects the realities concerning the bilateral arms control negotiations already underway between the United States and the Soviet Union in Geneva. It neither undermines nor undercuts nor prejudices or in any way interferes with those negotiations and this fact is considered by Canada to be absolutely central to the successful process of both sets of deliberations.

In the past, Canada has taken an active role in general discussions within the CD on the outer space issue including the submission of working papers. Now, with the establishment of an ad hoc committee, which will permit a more selective focussing on the issue, Canada will reinforce its efforts and will participate actively and effectively. Our objective will be to foster consensus and an understanding of actions required with a view to preventing an arms race in outer space.