
During our general and thematic debate, many lamented the sad state of the UN's multilateral disarmament machinery, particularly the CD and the UNDC. In this Committee, we are actively engaged in improving the effectiveness of our work. It is Canada's hope that the Conference on Disarmament next year will be able to arrive at agreement on a Program of Work. The UNDC can have an important role to play, making substantive and valuable contributions, as it has previously done.

Canada remains deeply disappointed with the failure of the Commission, again this year, to do any productive work, following several years of inability to agree upon a substantive report. This situation cannot continue, in our view. We remain concerned that once again the Committee has before it a resolution lacking recommendations on substantive issues for the Commission to take up next year, for its three week session. Such sessions involve considerable financial costs that must be assumed for UN services, although we have not even agreed on whether or not the Commission will have work to do.

Mr. Chair, Canada would like to see the UNDC return to a focus on substantive issues. However, next year, following in the reform mode of this Committee, it may be worthwhile for the Commission to devote its session to an examination and discussion of how it can play a more effective role and make the kind of contribution all would like to see. We regret that this could not take place this year. If the UNDC continues to be unable to even agree upon topics, much less upon a substantive report, then many countries will lose interest in attending its meetings and its role and relevance will diminish. We thus urge delegations to reflect actively on this in the coming weeks, and commit to a useful discussion next year in the Commission about the UNDC and its functioning. The First Committee could also discuss this next year in its thematic portion. This would not preclude a longer-term appraisal. Mr. Chair, we simply cannot go on adopting these hollow resolutions without an effort to come to grips with the underlying problems.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.