

(Mr. Pérez Novoa, Cuba)

... Some of the main and most important possessors of chemical and nuclear weapons are urging the immediate and rapid conclusion of the convention on chemical weapons. Yet it is surprising that they are not as passionate in clamouring for the rapid elimination of nuclear armaments and new armaments technologies which constitute the most serious threat for mankind. My Government considers that all our efforts must be channelled towards effective treaties to reduce and eliminate nuclear weapons. In that context, aware that any agreement eliminating any category of weapons will contribute to international peace and security, it believes that the early conclusion of a convention on chemical weapons, even though it might be a partial achievement within the context of the more complex problem of general and complete disarmament, is a step forward in the elimination of one of the categories of weapons threatening mankind. It is for that reason that the outcome of our work is a matter for constant attention in the bodies created to this end by our national authorities, which, drawing on the objectives we must reach, have taken a number of initiatives such as the dismantling of Cuban facilities that consume chemicals which will fall under the convention and a complete study of the levels of consumption and import of these chemicals.

Before expressing specific views on the "rolling text", I should like to make some general comments. We should not forget that for many years there were obstacles which delayed our negotiations for the conclusion of the convention, among them the insistence on the right to retaliation and on the retention of 2 per cent of chemical arsenals. We feel satisfied that these obstacles have now disappeared, and we would be even more satisfied if this had been the result of the multilateral negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament and not the outcome of bilateral agreements which we must now welcome and acknowledge, since this undoubtedly constitutes a step forward towards the conclusion of the convention. Even though we deem it important to take advantage of this situation to achieve the early conclusion of the convention, to the benefit of the security of all our peoples, we cannot accept demands that we should sacrifice the time available to us for other negotiations in the field of disarmament.

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