

(Mr. Sadleir, Australia)

Chemical weapons represent the success story of the Committee on Disarmament in terms of work done. Over the years, able and energetic Chairmen have taken the Working Group on the long march towards a convention to rid the world of these weapons. We have, despite everything, gone quite far. This year, we must pay tribute to the Ambassador of Canada, Ambassador McPhail for taking us further and to higher ground. His report, with its record of substantive provisions for a chemical weapons convention, lays out the ground ahead in a way that is easily understood. The agreements in it are the basis for future work. The differences of views clearly shown as alternatives are there for priority resolution. The Committee should start in on this work with full purpose. Its working group, which evidently is to have a Chairman drawn from the Group of 21, should be able to commence at the earliest moment in the 1984 session. Preparatory consultations even earlier could greatly help this objective.

(Mr. Wegener, Federal Republic of Germany)

Like most others, my delegation has carefully registered and welcomed the conceptual gains of our work this year in the chemical weapons field. We are gratified with the production of a new consolidated text. There is no intention on our part to downgrade the measure of progress achieved, let alone the dynamic performance of the Chairman of the Working Group and his able associates. The balance sheet, however, is hardly positive.

On 11 August, my delegation expressed its preoccupation with the current state of negotiations, especially if measured in terms of earlier hopes. We observed that one group of delegations among us, the socialist group, showed reluctance to join in overcoming the central obstacles for a future chemical weapons ban.

Meanwhile the distinguished delegates of the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, sharing our analysis, have voiced their concern in similar terms. Our own observations, substantiated by a number of facts, were coupled with an urgent appeal to the socialist group to show a greater measure of political flexibility and to document such a flexibility by practical contributions.