

(Mr. Alessi, Italy)

My delegation considers that progress can and therefore must be made during the present session, in three directions in particular: nuclear questions, and especially the general and complete prohibition of nuclear tests, chemical weapons, and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

In the short term, the elaboration of a convention prohibiting chemical weapons appears to be a realizable objective. In view of the importance that such a result would have in itself and for the multilateral disarmament negotiations as a whole, no effort should be spared to attain this objective. On 4 February 1983, we heard with satisfaction Mr. Bush, Vice-President of the United States, express the hope that the Committee's work in this field would be accelerated and negotiations undertaken for the conclusion of a treaty. A number of speakers have already stressed the interest with which the comprehensive document announced by Mr. Bush is awaited.

The areas of convergence, as well as the points of divergence, appear to us to be identified sufficiently clearly. The time has come to make a decisive effort to seek the necessary compromises and to overcome the points of divergence. In our view, the Working Group should concentrate its efforts on this task, with a view to moving on as soon as possible to the drafting of the articles of the convention. This delicate phase in the negotiations calls for appropriate methods and rhythms of work; it will be for the new Chairman of the Ad hoc Working Group to find procedures which, through their flexibility and informal nature, will contribute to the success of our efforts.

(Mr. Imai, Japan)

Considerable progress has been observed in the field of a ban on chemical weapons, resulting from the intensive work of last year. It will, we hope, become the basis on which further progress will be achieved this year, and in this context the recent statement by Mr. George Bush, Vice-President of the United States, who used the occasion of his presence in this Committee personally to announce that the United States' views on the content of a treaty banning chemical weapons would be submitted soon, is a welcome indication of the positive attitude which his country is assuming on this subject.

In the Working Group on Chemical Weapons this year, the key elements of a chemical weapons convention, that is, "Definitions", "Declarations", and "Verification", need to be considered in depth and in close connection with each other. With regard to "Verification", we expect that progress will be achieved toward the establishment of effective international verification measures, including on-site inspections, with the co-operation of the Group of Scientific Experts on their technical aspects. I believe that progress in the field of verification will facilitate the early conclusion of a chemical weapons convention.