

(Mr. von Wagner, Germany)

considered. However, there could be a fallacy in such thinking: as I have indicated before, arms control treaties are not only luxury items that follow peace; they are vital instruments in bringing about and strengthening peace.

We know that our negotiations have reached a watershed. . The final breakthrough is in sight. The United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 46/35 C, strongly urged the Conference on Disarmament, "as a matter of the highest priority, to resolve in the forthcoming months outstanding issues so as to achieve a final agreement during its 1992 session". If the Conference on Disarmament failed to live up to this task, the consequences for the global arms control dialogue might be grave - as the positive ramifications of success would go beyond chemical disarmament.

The time has come for a global ban on chemical weapons. After long periods of contentious debate and stagnation, we face a singular opportunity. Let us grasp it so that, during the months to come, we may adopt by consensus the text of the chemical weapons convention.

Mr. BATSANOV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): First of all, Mr. President, I should like to congratulate you on taking up this very important post at our Conference and to wish you every success in your very difficult work. I have taken the floor at this time as the outgoing Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, even though in a week I will of course be performing my last function, which is to present the report on our work last year. But I have taken the floor in order to congratulate Ambassador von Wagner very sincerely on taking over from me at this time, and to express my full conviction that under his leadership - I do not wish to dwell on his qualities, with which we are all familiar - we will achieve final success, by succeeding in finalizing the draft convention on chemical weapons.