...

But perhaps, above all, we have made some progress in the substance of the items on our agenda. It is clear that such progress is linear, slow, incremental progress, because that is apparently the nature of work on disarmament. Quantum leaps don't come readily in this field. We have made that progress in chemical weapons, in radiological weapons, in outer space and -- yes -- in nuclear testing, where in spite of our extreme difficulties in the last three years, there are more than enough working papers on the table of this Conference to form a fertile basis for further work on nuclear testing. And there has been the splendid work of the Group of Scientific Experts in the field of detection of relevant underground events. And there has been our work towards the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament, which is I think moving towards a successful conclusion.

So the cynical or dark view of what we have done is not the right view in the opinion of my delegation. More important is to recognize that we have worked in difficult times, sometimes apparently dark times, and we have kept the light burning on the hill.

I would like to look now at four of our agenda items, key areas in which progress is available to us.

The first is chemical weapons. It is widely recognized in the Conference that a convention is at hand, that it is within our reach. It should not take too much longer to bring it to a conclusion. Let no one underestimate the significance of that event to the world, and indeed to the life of this Conference.

Informal consultations in the Conference are focusing at present on the issue of challenge inspection. I think it would be widely agreed that this is an issue that needs to be resolved urgently and satisfactorily so that we can move forward towards the goal of a universal convention. I would like to make a couple of comments on the issue of challenge inspection.

Our approach, the Australian approach, is that such a system is required, that it should be in the Convention. We believe that it should be a mandatory system, but we believe that its application should be at the point of last resort. That should be its main characteristic. The question of the problem