

The Conference on Disarmament certainly derives strength from such a consensus, as it seeks to conclude a treaty of great complexity and unparalleled scope. Clearly, the speed with which today's Conference has been convened; and the international response to it are cause for optimism about the future.

Mr. President, the elimination of chemical weapons from the face of the earth is not merely a pragmatic necessity. More than a common sense assessment of our security interests is involved. The issue touches on our sense of ourselves as human beings. We know that, individually and collectively, we are susceptible to insecurities, fears and animosities. This is a reality. Surely, it is the responsibility of governments to seek to limit our capability to inflict abhorrent cruelties and punishments on each other. Chemical weapons use, inevitably involving civilian as well as military victims, only provoke revulsion. Chemical weapons must be banned. We owe our citizens no less. Let us get on with the task.