

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

In recent years, high priority has been given on our agenda to the efforts to create a chemical weapons convention. The Swedish Government is of the opinion that all States, notably the major military Powers, have a genuine political will to achieve a convention prohibiting all chemical weapons. However, the degree of complexity of the subject matter and the tense relations between the major Powers have contributed towards making progress in the negotiations painfully slow. However, necessary stages in the process have been dealt with in a satisfactory way.

Last year's Ad Hoc Working Group managed to present a report which was adopted unanimously. For this year, it is important that the results reached by the 1983 Working Group be fully utilized.

In this context my delegation has noted with interest two initiatives.

One is the announcement at the Stockholm Conference by the Secretary of State of the United States, Mr. Shultz, to the effect that a draft treaty on the complete ban of chemical weapons be presented to the Conference on Disarmament. We welcome this as an essential contribution in the continuous negotiations in the CD on the subject. I find it urgent that these negotiations should be taken up right from the beginning of this session.

The other is the initiative of the Warsaw Pact States concerning chemical weapons in Europe. This expresses a deep concern for the question of chemical weapons. However, we feel that the work on a chemical ban in Europe should not take precedence over the global negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. In our opinion, none of the problems connected with negotiating a global ban would be easier to solve in a regional framework.

It is encouraging that the Ad Hoc Working Group on Chemical Weapons has been able to recommend to the Conference to re-establish the Group as soon as possible and with every intent not later than the end of the second week of the Conference. It is equally promising that there now appears to be an agreement on a mandate on the negotiations for a subsidiary body on the item.

The remaining issues can only be solved in a spirit of compromise. Particularly relevant are the attitudes of those States which possess by far the largest arsenals of chemical weapons. We urge them to negotiate seriously and constructively. If so, the Conference stands a good chance in making headway towards a convention.