

(Mr. Errera, France)

multilateral endeavours, not by imposed actions but by agreed decisions, on the basis of broad consensus. The best way of getting everyone to agree to the common rule is still, where possible, to draw it up jointly and to give the international organization responsible for implementing it the power to see that it is enforced. For this reason too the treaty for the prohibition of chemical weapons is an encouraging precedent.

We should now look to the future. The future means first of all an effort to ensure that the convention enjoys as far as possible universal support at the forthcoming United Nations General Assembly, so that the largest possible number of States sign it from the outset. It is true that several delegations have expressed some hesitation on certain points of the treaty. They are not alone. It is no secret to anyone that France, like many other countries, would by far have preferred a challenge inspection regime that was more intrusive, more dissuasive, and therefore better able to ensure security for all. It agreed to compromise so as to arrive at an agreement acceptable to all. It therefore calls upon those to whom these concessions were directed to become part of the common momentum and thus help to enhance international security. This is no time for recriminations or warnings. It is incumbent upon each of us to shoulder our responsibilities and do everything in our power to ensure that this treaty, drafted in our small body, receives the support of the largest possible number of States.

Let us be proud of the common effort and work together so that this first genuine multilateral disarmament treaty becomes truly universal. The message that we convey to the international community in New York must be clear: the treaty prohibiting chemical weapons is a good treaty. It takes into account the security interests of all. It constitutes the first significant step in a collective endeavour to eradicate weapons of mass destruction. It must be universal. In this context, I am pleased to confirm to the Conference on Disarmament today the invitation extended by the President of the French Republic to the ceremony for the signature of the treaty for the prohibition of chemical weapons in Paris, at the beginning of 1993.

I wish finally to repeat here how delighted my country is that the negotiations on the convention succeeded under the chairmanship of the representative of Germany, a country with which France shares a common destiny in Europe. It is right and proper to pay tribute to the impartiality, the fairness, the transparency, the persistence, the energy with which Ambassador von Wagner and his whole delegation successfully completed this task, in the interests of all.