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(Mr. Tonwe, Nigeria)

Having said that, the Nigerian delegation would like to say how pleased we are to note the amount of progress that has been made in the last year on the convention to ban chemical weapons. We would like to congratulate Ambassador Ian Cromartie of the United Kingdom for the significant work done in this respect under his chairmanship. We are glad that Ambassador Rolf Ekéus of Sweden, our dedicated colleague, has been elected to, hopefully, conclude the good work that has been done in this field so far.

The prospect of a chemical weapons convention in the near future is, for my delegation, a source of confidence in the future of our disarmament negotiations. If it materializes, the convention would, in itself, be historic: it would be the first major disarmament agreement. Above all, it would demonstrate, once again, on a multilaterally significant issue, that the major Powers can co-operate intensively in diverse areas, if their national interests, or their perceptions of international problems, converge. It would further confirm our belief that given the political will, the Conference on Disarmament could make rapid progress in other areas.

My delegation would like to reiterate the views we have expressed in the past that the final text of the chemical weapons convention should ensure that the destruction of all stockpiles and facilities would be done in such a manner that the present chemical-weapon Powers would not in any way be in a position to exploit their position during the transition period. Furthermore, it would have to guarantee in no uncertain terms, to the non-chemical-weapon Powers, the right to unfettered development of their budding chemical industries for peaceful purposes.