

(The President)

It was also of very great significance that the President and the General Secretary declared, on 21 November 1985, that they favour a general and complete prohibition of chemical weapons and the destruction of existing stockpiles of such weapons. They stated that "they agreed to accelerate efforts to conclude an effective and verifiable international convention on this matter". In this context, they stated that they had agreed to intensify bilateral discussions on such a chemical weapons ban, including discussions on the question of verification.

The only place within the world community in which a full-scale and serious effort is being made towards the negotiation of a universal chemical weapons convention is in this Conference. There is perhaps no more lively and positive instance of the relationship between what must be done bilaterally and what must be done multilaterally than the subject of chemical weapons. Simply, a bilateral agreement or some other form of agreement limited to a number of States or a region of the world on the issue of chemical weapons would be of very little value. What is required with regard to those abhorrent weapons is a universal convention. For this purpose all must participate and no one should look for a partial or limited solution.

It is appropriate at this point to note that during the past seven years, although substantial and significant political negotiations have taken place within this Conference, there have been few concrete results in terms of practical progress towards disarmament agreements. We all have a vital interest in changing this situation and there is no area more likely to fulfil that vital interest, in the short term, than the area of chemical weapons. It is the Australian Government's earnest hope that in this eighth year of the Conference, real progress on a universal chemical weapons convention will be made. Every passing day makes more urgent the need to conclude this convention.