

(Ms. Wilde, New Zealand)

I say this notwithstanding the important work being done here on the negotiation of a comprehensive chemical weapons convention. New Zealand fully supports the work of the CD on chemical weapons. We pledge our support for, and co-operation with, the Ad hoc Committee in its work. The point I am making is that expectations have changed over the past few months. As Presidents Bush and Gorbachev have done with START and CFE, the CD needs to set a self-imposed deadline for the completion of a CW text. That would help ensure that the momentum generated by the Paris and Canberra conferences is not lost. It would demonstrate that the CD is able to adapt to the accelerating pace of change in world security affairs. It would put political pressure on all States to find solutions to outstanding problems - for who wants to be seen to be standing in the way of the convention?

Last year under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Morel, the chemical weapons Ad hoc Committee made useful progress in redefining the "rolling text", and reconciling some of the outstanding differences. I refer in particular to the newly developed annex on chemicals, the protocol on inspection procedures, and the valuable work done by the Technical Group on Instrumentation.

The Instrumentation Group's report makes clear, once and for all, that the technical requirements of the convention's verification régime can be met by modern technology. Equally the protocol on inspection procedures reflects the considerable degree of consensus that exists on the requirements of an inspection régime.

I am heartened that verification difficulties at the technical level are now seen as problems to be solved, and not as convenient excuses to delay arms control. Such an approach augurs well for the resolution of more fundamental political issues. I am confident that under its new Chairman, Ambassador Hyltenius of Sweden, the Committee will address these remaining differences in a constructive fashion.

The recent agreement by the super-Powers to proceed to substantially reduce their chemical weapon stocks provides further impetus for work here. Their decision to cease all chemical weapons production when the convention enters into force will have a very positive impact on the talks in the CD. However, New Zealand cannot support the super-Powers' decision to keep a residual stockpile of chemical weapons until all chemical-weapon-capable States adhere to the convention. We have very real concerns about the implications of this approach for an effective and all-embracing multilateral agreement.

There is growing awareness, in the South Pacific region, of the chemical weapons issues before this Conference. For this, and for its wider efforts in pursuit of chemical disarmament, New Zealand would like to take this opportunity to commend the Government of Australia.