

(Mr. Hyltenius, Sweden)

reach consensus on the mandate for an ad hoc committee on the nuclear test ban, the first item on our agenda. My delegation hopes that these efforts will be crowned with success in the near future. I listened with great interest to the important statements made by His Excellency the Foreign Minister of Peru and by my colleague the distinguished Ambassador of Belgium, covering a wide range of issues. My own intervention, as I said, will be devoted entirely to the question of chemical weapons.

The 1989 session of the Conference on Disarmament started with the firm joint commitment to redouble efforts, as a matter of urgency, to resolve expeditiously the remaining issues and to conclude a comprehensive Convention on chemical weapons at the earliest date. The support for our endeavour could not have been more clearly stated than in the Paris Declaration and in the consensus resolutions of the General Assembly. Public opinion world-wide, outraged by the suffering of chemical warfare victims, also expected rapid progress from the negotiations in Geneva. The risk of further spread of chemical weapons had made such progress imperative. The necessary framework to deal successfully with the remaining issues was quickly established, above all through the energetic, resourceful and methodical leadership provided by Ambassador Morel as Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee and by the five working group chairmen. The first half of the session is now drawing to a close, and it is time to take stock of the situation. I should, therefore, today like to offer a few observations on the part of the Swedish delegation.

Undeniably we have made some progress, but against the background of the political will and sense of urgency expressed in the Paris Declaration, and the negotiating framework and resources provided to us, this progress is far too modest. The question imposes itself of whether there exists a gap between declared intent and real commitment.

The inability of the Conference as a whole to reach consensus on a minor updating of the mandate for the Ad hoc Committee seemed ominous to some of us, already in February. During the ensuing months a considerable amount of important work has been done, including in some key areas of the draft convention. However, we have been unable to come closer to a solution regarding a few crucially important outstanding issues, e.g. challenge inspections, the Executive Council, the order of destruction and the effective prohibition of the use of chemical weapons. At the same time we have devoted considerable time to issues of detail which have acquired disproportionate importance. There is also a tendency to compensate for lack of penetration in key areas by prematurely discussing new concepts. Too many meetings have provided repetitions of discussions held in 1988 or 1987. It is evident that outdated instructions are not sufficient to make progress in these negotiations.

It is not my intention to paint too gloomy a picture. However, only if we realistically face the issues can we make substantive progress. The spring session has permitted us to clear the field and to identify and define a number of problems. Hopefully, the May recess will give sufficient time to delegations and capitals for thorough study and review of the main issues,