

(Mr. Somogyi, Hungary)

This is all the more deplorable since last year we witnessed a number of promising events, such as the Paris Conference already mentioned or the commitment of the Canberra Conference to the cause of prohibiting chemical weapons.

The forty-fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly can also be cited here. At this session, American and Soviet statements heralded the sincere readiness of the two parties to radically reduce their chemical weapon stockpiles even before the conclusion of the convention. The meeting of the leaders of the two major Powers in Malta produced a further indication that an agreement on 80 per cent reductions in the two States' chemical weapon stockpiles could be concluded at the Soviet-American summit scheduled for early summer, and this was reaffirmed in the joint statement adopted at the recent Moscow meeting of their Foreign Ministers.

It is possible for the impact of these events to determine this year's activity in the Conference on Disarmament and enhance the prevailing optimism concerning the early conclusion of the chemical weapons convention. That requires the solution of such problems as the scope of the convention in its final form, or the unconditional prohibition of the use of chemical weapons, for example. Solving these questions could help finalize the technical, organizational and procedural aspects of the draft convention on the basis of the significant progress made so far.

A reliable verification system is a determining factor in the effective implementation of a future chemical weapons convention. The system, the main elements of which are already in place, will include the important mechanism of a non-refusable "challenge inspection". We believe that the useful idea of "ad hoc checks" could well be inserted into the existing structure of verification. This method of inspection based on an elaborate system of quotas could be an efficient part of the complex verification system and would provide the participating States with a further opportunity to display their openness and willingness to co-operate.

In this connection, we welcome and fully support the proposal officially put forward by the Foreign Minister of Austria at the opening session of the Conference on Disarmament that Austria should host the international organization to be set up under the terms of the future convention. Austria, which is not a full member of the Conference on Disarmament, has always displayed keen interest in a chemical weapons ban, and this new contribution provides further evidence of its commitment to the cause of the convention.

The Hungarian Government has repeatedly and concretely demonstrated its determination to promote actively, in every constructive way, the comprehensive prohibition of chemical weapons, the destruction of their stockpiles, and the early conclusion of a convention thereon. This was manifested in the unilateral initiative put forward by our Foreign Minister at the recent session of the United Nations General Assembly, declaring Hungary's readiness to act in conformity with the future convention. That means that - besides reaffirming our chemical-weapon-free status - Hungary is ready to comply with all the provisions of the future convention even before it is concluded and enters into force. It also means that we intend to make a