

(Mr. Datcu, Romania)

We share the widely held view that the Conference on Disarmament could and should redouble its efforts to prepare this year the first draft of a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons.

The excellent work that was carried out last year under the inspired Chairmanship of Ambassador Rolf Ekéus of Sweden, together with the rapid establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons and the promising beginning of consultations under the active Chairmanship of Ambassador Stanislas Turbanski of Poland, are positive signs that give us cause to hope for a major break-through in this respect. For our part, we shall do our best to contribute to this positive course of events.

Under the present circumstances, the Conference on Disarmament is in particular need of a break-through, especially as the prohibition of chemical weapons would undoubtedly represent the first step towards outlawing a weapon of mass destruction that exists in the arsenals of some States.

However, I wish to add straightaway that, notwithstanding the importance and urgency of the work aimed at the prohibition of chemical weapons, the Geneva Conference should not be confined exclusively to this question. We would like to stress the need for an approach under which the issue of top priority, namely, nuclear weapons, should not be left out of our negotiations under the pretext of concentrating our efforts on the prohibition of chemical weapons.

(Mr. Butler, Australia)

There is nothing which should divide members of this Conference with respect to the objective of removing all chemical weapons from this earth. The existing regime of international law relating to chemical weapons, while largely effective, is incomplete.

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