

(The President)

Because we are on the eve of the thirtieth anniversary of the Conference, we should be aware of the urgency and importance of achieving progress in our consultations and our work and, in particular, we hope that we will be able to complete the work on a multilateral treaty concerning chemical weapons. The Conference has been encouraged to intensify its deliberations by the visits from distinguished figures who have presented the views of their Governments. We specially noted the presence of the Vice-Chancellor of Germany, His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Genscher. I had already had an opportunity to say how honoured we were by his presence, but also by his cooperation, not only because he is Vice-Chancellor but also because his country and his delegation have made a particularly noteworthy contribution in the work of our Conference. I am also referring to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Zaire, Mr. Bagbeni Adeito, the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Poland, Mr. Andrzej Kostarczyk, and the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy, Ambassador Bruno Bottai. I personally greatly appreciated the contributions they made and I think that I am reflecting the sentiments of the Conference in saying that all of us together express our gratitude to them here.

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(The President)

... Whereas efforts were made in the past to attribute the lack of progress in multilateral disarmament to an often unfavourable international climate, today there are grounds to hope, given the new circumstances, that multilateral bodies will recover their proper place and at last carry through their universal mission in the service of disarmament. 1992 could then see the establishment of the first genuinely multilateral disarmament instrument which will put an end to the existence of an entire category of particularly devastating and murderous weapons. It is imperative that the convention on chemical weapons should be recorded among the achievements of the Conference on Disarmament. This contribution could offer a promising start for resolving the other items on its agenda, particularly those relating to nuclear and space issues. In discharging this lofty task, the United Nations, through our Conference, the only organ responsible for disarmament negotiations, would be seeing its original purpose reinstated. Its responsibility, in this field, would then no longer be reduced to the passive role which, for decades, has confined it to the simple function of rubber-stamping agreements concluded without its participation.