

(Mr. Genscher, Germany)

Your appointment of Ambassador von Wagner to the chairmanship of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons during this decisive year is an expression of your confidence in Germany's commitment to these negotiations, and I thank you for it. Germany takes this responsibility very seriously and we will do all in our power to bring the negotiations to a punctual and successful conclusion.

Chemical weapons are a man-made scourge of humanity. As I have repeatedly said at this Conference, they are not weapons at all but means of exterminating people.

The ban on the use of chemical weapons has been disregarded time and again and has proved inadequate. Even unilateral measures, however urgent these might be, can only temporarily stem the tide of proliferation. Only the clear-cut prohibition of any association with chemical weapons, hence including production, acquisition and possession, can finally free us of this scourge of humanity.

The convention prohibiting chemical weapons can only do this if two preconditions are met: first, accession to it by the vast majority of the international community, and, secondly, confidence in the effective verification of the prohibitions agreed on.

The first precondition for a successful convention is accession by as extensive a membership as possible. For that, the advantages of the Convention must be judged as outweighing its cost. For some States which do not see their neighbours as a threat, the gain in security may seem small. But no one should forget how deadly the combination of missile technology and mass-destruction weapons can be. No State is immune to that threat.

Now let me say something about the second aspect, verification. Only verifiability of the obligations assumed creates confidence, and only confidence creates security.

The negotiations on the verification system of a chemical weapons convention are far advanced, and everything points to possible consensus. The reliably verifiable proscription by the international community of a whole category of weapons of mass destruction will be a pioneering achievement.

Controls of the chemical industry are indispensable for a chemical weapons convention. The task of the convention is to deter, by means inclusive of verification measures, any attempt to misuse the civilian chemical industry for the production of chemical weapons. Naturally, such verification measures, being so new, cannot function perfectly from the outset. The task of the future Chemical Weapons Organization and its technical secretariat will be to gradually develop verification procedures that work to the satisfaction of all member States.

The international community must make it part of its code of conduct to accord a State that accedes to this convention greater confidence and willingness to cooperate than a State that does not.