

Miss SOLESBY (United Kingdom): I look forward to congratulating you, Mr. President, and to welcoming our new colleagues when I take the floor to speak on behalf of the United Kingdom. This morning I am speaking on behalf of the Western Group.

As Co-ordinator of the Western Group, I warmly welcome the establishment of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. The speed with which this has been accomplished is a good augury for our future work. It has followed detailed, informal consultations held by yourself. I thank you, Mr. President, and colleagues from all groups who have helped to make this possible.

The Committee has a task of great importance before it. We look forward to resuming the substantive negotiations without delay. The important thing is that each of us here should contribute to our utmost to resolving the remaining problems in our negotiations. We will all have in mind the call of the Final Document of the Paris Conference to redouble our efforts. Indeed the report of the Ad hoc Committee in CD/881, which we have just adopted, contains the consensus recommendation that "the results of the Paris Conference on the prohibition of chemical weapons be taken into account in the future work on the convention".

(Miss Solesby, United Kingdom)

Western Group countries have made major contributions in the past, and intend to maintain their efforts intensively in the months ahead. We want a good convention as soon as possible. As the distinguished Ambassador of Belgium, speaking as the Western Co-ordinator, said on 7 February, "What I can assure you of is that the Western Group, together with all the other delegations, will seek the most realistic, the most effective and the most expeditious way to arrive at the conclusion of a convention which will free mankind from the fear of chemical weapons".

While I have the floor, I would like to refer to one particular passage in the Paris Declaration, namely that which establishes that "any State wishing to contribute to these negotiations should be able to do so". The Western Group of countries is pleased that a larger number of Governments, not members of the Conference on Disarmament, have applied to participate in the work of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons than ever before. We believe the work of the Ad hoc Committee will much benefit from the presence of all these countries, and look forward to co-operating with them.

Lastly, I should like to join others in expressing the pleasure of the Western Group of countries at the accession of Ambassador Pierre Morel as Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee. His well-known personal qualities, and above all his eminent contribution to the successful outcome of the Paris Conference, give us every confidence in his leadership of our work during the coming months.