

(Mr. Dumas, France)

countries, military Powers with chemical weapons and Powers without them, to curb a worrying trend, the only treatment for which is a complete and verified ban. In the mean time, until the future convention formalizes this ban, let us all exercise restraint and act responsibly, as the Paris Declaration invites us to do, to avoid any developments that we would all regret later.

Another area where the Paris Declaration is of obvious value relates to the confirmed support of the 149 States for the role of the United Nations. This concerns in particular the investigatory powers entrusted to the Secretary-General by virtue of procedures that, I might venture to recall, France had the honour of originating, with resolution 37/98D. I welcome the presence of experts here today who are meeting for the second time, and whose task it is - as the Paris Declaration states - to "strengthen the efficiency of existing procedures". These procedures, as we know, give some latitude to the Secretary-General. It is important that, when he decides to implement them, they should be promptly applied. Here again, the Paris Declaration, which "calls for the co-operation of all States in order to facilitate the action of the Secretary-General", indicates the path we must follow.

A second aspect of the role of the United Nations which is underlined by the Paris Declaration pertains to initiatives that could enable the international community to exercise its vigilance with regard to the ban on the use of chemical weapons: some have deemed that the Declaration is not sufficiently precise on this point. It is clear, however, that such an expression concerns the penalties that could be applied to a State that ignored the ban.

A renewed condemnation of CW use, definition of the link between the old Protocol and the future convention, the need to redouble efforts in Geneva and to settle outstanding issues, detailed analysis of the phenomenon of proliferation, precise mention of the essential role of the United Nations: on all these points the Paris Declaration is a point of reference for your work. But at the same time it gives new impetus, on behalf of the international community it expresses a fervent obligation: to conclude at an early date a convention on the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of all chemical weapons and on their destruction. This feeling of urgency cannot be modified by anything except for the conviction that problems still remain to be solved. It is the existence of these problems which deterred us from setting a precise deadline. What we want is not a convention on the cheap but one that is effective and effectively verifiable. These problems must be solved rapidly.

What are these difficulties that have yet to be solved? They may be grouped under five headings, corresponding to the five working groups which I would like to be the immediate and visible reflection of our determination.

Verification, first of all: this is much more difficult in the chemical domain than in the nuclear domain. It must enable us to ensure not only that no one keeps a secret stock of chemical weapons, or militarily significant precursors, but also that no party can use its chemical industry to produce such stocks in conditions that would escape the notice of even random inspection. It will therefore be necessary for you to elaborate a complete range of procedures combining routine inspection and challenge inspection.