

(Mr. Ahmad, Pakistan.)

In the area of chemical weapons, the most promising field of our activity, forward movement is in evidence inasmuch as the structure of the spade work done last year has been formalized. The areas of disagreement and the lack of consensus on various important elements have been brought into sharper focus, which should provide an opportunity to the concerned Governments to reflect on their positions. The work done this year would best be seen in terms of its utilization next year, when the shape of the proposed convention should begin to emerge.

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Mr. CROMARTIE (United Kingdom): Mr. Chairman, in my statement on 23 August I welcomed the progress that we had made on chemical weapons; otherwise it has, unfortunately, to be admitted that this has not been a successful year for the Committee on Disarmament. We have allowed ourselves to be dominated by procedural issues to an extent which is to no one's credit. We lost eight weeks at the beginning of our Session over arguments on the agenda. Now, the last three or four weeks have been largely spent in writing reports; first in working groups and then in the Committee itself. With the exception of the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Chemical Weapons, these documents are little more than catalogues of opposing views. This experience has confirmed my delegation in the view, which I expressed in my first plenary statement to the Committee on 4 February, that changes must be made in our procedures. The first necessity is for delegations to recognize that, if arguments have not been convincing in debate, they will not be made more so by trying to force conclusions on a working group, when they are not generally shared. Secondly, it must be recognized that not every view expressed in a working group is worthy of record or indeed of answer. This failure to recognize these facts, and to exercise restraint in the common interest of all, has contributed most to the excessive length of the reports, and to the excessive amount of time which has been devoted to them; the effort which we spend in writing them is out of all proportion to the extent to which they will be read.