

(Mr. von Stülpnagel, Federal Republic of Germany)

I think that the recent activities which have resulted in a notable alleviation of East-West tensions could now permit the Conference to concentrate its work on the negotiations to ban chemical weapons, even if this results in somewhat lesser attentiveness to some other points of our agenda. The unexpected and unhappy spread of the idea of the possible usefulness of chemical weapons, and the recent use of those weapons, making no distinction between combatants and non-combatants, has sharpened our eagerness to secure a global chemical weapons ban. We have seen that as long as the development, production, storage and transfer of chemical weapons is not prohibited, the danger of their use continues too. The States which attended the recent Paris Conference declared that only a comprehensive and global interdiction of chemical weapons can solve this problem.

A total of 149 States have confirmed the urgency of this task and vowed to redouble their efforts at the negotiations on the subject here in Geneva. Redoubling our already solid and conscientious work can only mean more time, more manpower and more focused and success-oriented work. The new work programme and method proposed by the Chairman-designate of the Ad hoc Committee for 1989 reflects this view. I plead, therefore, that the Conference should utilize all possibilities to put at the disposal of this programme the necessary time and resources.

I would like to close my remarks with a thought that goes beyond the immediate necessities before us. A convention banning chemical weapons is an urgent task, in itself, and does not need elaborate justification. But there is an aspect of our efforts which goes beyond this immediate aim of the conclusion of a multilateral CW convention, and which will have an impact on future chances for all multilateral disarmament efforts. The importance of the subject of a CW ban, and the importance of our being able to negotiate an acceptable agreement on a multilateral basis, combine to constitute a litmus test of whether it is possible for the world community to conduct meaningful multilateral negotiations at all and to come up with consensus final products or not. Since Paris, we know that there is a fundamental consensus in this world that chemical weapons should be banned. Our Conference should not only acknowledge that consensus, but execute it in the appropriate way.