

(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States)

... Our delegation also welcomes hopefully the appearance before the Conference of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, Mr. Roland Dumas. I am certain he will have an expert analysis and present us with sensitive perceptions of the Conference on chemical weapons which he so ably chaired in Paris last month. I would be remiss today if I did not mention the warm hospitality extended by the French Government during the Paris Conference to all delegations, and the outstanding preparatory work performed by our friend and esteemed colleague, Ambassador Pierre Morel. It has been less than four weeks now since representatives of 149 nations concluded on 11 January their work at the Paris Conference on chemical weapons. In the Declaration issued by that Conference, those 149 nations stated their determination "to prevent any recourse to chemical weapons by completely eliminating them". Consequently, the Declaration addresses prominently the ongoing negotiations here in the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons.

The Paris Conference has provided a real impetus - the force of the consensus view of 149 nations - for our negotiations. It is our challenge now to seize this moment and to search for practical solutions to the problems that remain. As anyone who has followed our work over the past years can attest, there is ample room for the contributions of all members of this body, as well as those of non-member participants, to this search. Such broadened participation would constitute a real redoubling of our efforts in the chemical weapons negotiations.

The problems that remain are not insignificant. Verification is clearly the major difficulty. There are other problems as well, including ensuring undiminished security during the transition period, the possible development of new agents, assistance, and globality. Our delegation is prepared to do its part to resolve all of these issues. We are ready to get down to work as soon as possible in the chemical weapons Committee.

Ambassador WILLIAM B. FRIEDERSDORF (United States): I should first of all like to associate myself with the condolences expressed on the decease of Miss Levin.

As co-ordinator of the Western Group, and in taking the floor for the first time in the plenary of the Conference on Disarmament, I should like to express my satisfaction at seeing you, Mr. President, presiding over our meetings. Aware of your qualities as a diplomat, your patience and understanding, I feel reassured in addressing the Conference after such eminent and competent speakers as Ambassador Garcia Robles, Ambassador Theodor and Friedersdorf and the distinguished representative of Egypt in his capacity as spokesman of the Neutral and Non-aligned Group. We also hope today to hear Mr. Dumas, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, who was President of the recent Paris Conference on the prohibition of chemical