

(Mr. Ijewere, Nigeria)

My delegation regrets to observe that the Committee, towards the end of the current session, has slid into the same quagmire of lack of purpose and flexibility which was its lot at the beginning of the 1983 session. The Committee has relapsed into a rather untoward complacency which is getting more and more ominous for our future work. We cannot hide our apprehensions when we observe that our early hopes of a rapid elaboration of a Chemical Weapons convention are becoming more and more illusory as the major parties concerned continue to stall negotiations on a future convention that would constitute a major breakthrough and inspire more fruitful efforts in disarmament negotiations.

Mr. McPHAIL (Canada): As we have indicated to the secretariat in the last couple of days, my intention is to speak both as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Chemical Weapons and as representative of Canada.

As Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group I have the honour to table document CD/416, which has been distributed this afternoon, a few moments ago; it is the result of very strenuous and, I think, laudable efforts of the secretariat facilities which have been put in place since we completed our work last night between 6 and 7 p.m. That document embodies the 1983 report of our Group to the Committee on Disarmament. The report and its annexes have been agreed to by all members of the Working Group and this, I believe, augurs well for future work in achieving a ban on chemical weapons.

I want to comment for a few minutes on what the Working Group has accomplished this session to supplement what the report itself indicates in detail.

You will all recall that General Assembly resolution 37/98 B urged the Committee on Disarmament "as a matter of high priority, to intensify, during its session in 1983, the elaboration of ... a convention ... with a view to enabling the Committee to achieve agreement at the earliest date."

The resolution summarizes the collective wish of the international community; and I believe that we have, through the Working Group on Chemical Weapons, clearly shown the measure to which this body has successfully sought this year to fulfil the resolution's purposes.

Translated into specifics, the Working Group's objective can be said to have been defined both substantively and procedurally on the basis of the sentiment that underlies that resolution. Substantively, of course, the goal was to achieve the negotiation of a verifiable convention banning the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and requiring the destruction of existing stockpiles and means of production, thus finally eliminating the threat of the use