

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

My delegation is pleased to note that last year a number of important and constructive steps were taken and agreements reached in the negotiations on a chemical weapons convention. Most problems of political importance have now been solved. Measures were also taken to support and enhance confidence in those negotiations.

Admittedly, intricate technical problems remain. With the draft Convention before us, its conclusion is, however, no longer a distant goal but a close possibility. I urge all negotiating parties to make full use of the extraordinary opportunity we have to conclude a major disarmament agreement at this session.

When speaking in this forum, I have consistently stressed how important it is that States should demonstrate their commitment to the common goal of the Convention by desisting from the production of chemical weapons. Considering the advanced stage of the negotiations I wish, once again, to call upon all parties to refrain from any action that may complicate our negotiations.

Some issues related to the negotiations on the convention have been dealt with in direct contacts between the two major military Powers. I trust that these bilateral talks will prove useful in helping to solve some remaining problems.

It is clear that only a multilateral and comprehensive agreement can safeguard the interests of all States and provide for effective and viable prohibition. Obligations to be assumed and advantages to be gained must be valid for all.

The need for universality has also been the guiding principle in Sweden's consistent cautioning against resorting to partial measures in this field.

In their Washington statement the leaders of the United States and Soviet Union reaffirmed the need to intensify negotiations on a convention. This commitment must be honoured by active promotion of the negotiations in the Conference.

The need for results is urgent. The specific political conditions for chemical disarmament are as good as they are likely ever to be. Now is the opportunity. It must be seized, speedily and with determination.