

(Mr. Vidas, Yugoslavia)

In the course of the last year, the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons made a step further in the direction of elaboration of a chemical weapons convention. We hope that this year the negotiations on the outstanding issues will be completed in the Committee so that the drafting of the convention may enter its final phase. To achieve this, it will be necessary to generate greater political will. Any further delay and hindrance of the final solution will adversely affect disarmament.

(Mr. Ekeus, Sweden)

We should by now have learnt that it is a futile exercise to try by means of far-reaching mandates to force an unwilling government to commit itself in advance to concluding a treaty before it knows the full contents of that treaty. For example, this multilateral negotiating forum has for many years (15 years) registered progress in the very complicated task of reaching a Chemical Weapons Convention without a negotiating mandate. It was not until last year that the subsidiary body was entrusted with a full negotiating mandate. If our predecessors in this body had applied the same policy of requiring full negotiating mandates as we ourselves try to do now with regard to a nuclear test ban, the Conference would not be even close to negotiations on chemical weapons. Happily enough they took a more pragmatic approach, with the effect that we are now drafting a Convention on the subject.

(Mr. Tonwe, Nigeria)

While my delegation believes that priority should be accorded to measures leading to nuclear disarmament, we would not in any way wish to derogate from the importance and urgency of a treaty prohibiting chemical weapons.

My delegation is gratified that some progress has been made during this session with regard to the setting up of an ad hoc committee with a negotiating mandate on the question. We hope that all the subsidiary bodies connected with a chemical weapons prohibition treaty will soon be in place so that the problem can be tackled more effectively.