

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

conclusion of a chemical weapons convention, and it is well known that we need to spare no effort and spare no energy to arrive at the early introduction of a truly global verifiable ban on chemical weapons. I need not underscore the great importance of nuclear items, and this body devotes considerable attention to them. At the same time, we are aware of the considerable progress in the bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union, which could well result soon in considerable reductions in their nuclear arsenals. I can assure our visitors today that we feel encouraged by their presence here. Their message delivered to us today constitutes a new and fresh element for our consideration.

Mr. BATSANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian):

... Mr. President, since this is my first statement in March, I would like to congratulate you as you take up your important post and assure you that the Soviet delegation will provide you with full support and co-operation. I also feel that I must express our gratitude to the distinguished Ambassador of the Netherlands, Mr. Hendrik Wagenmakers, who guided the Conference through its work in February. Under his energetic and tactful leadership we managed to resolve a number of important matters, thus opening the way to a rapid commencement of work on the substance of the issues which we have on the agenda, in particular the prohibition of chemical weapons. It is this specific topic, or rather one of the concrete aspects of it, to which I wish to devote my statement today.

By agreement with the head of the United States delegation, Ambassador S. Ledogar, I am hereby providing information on the fourteenth round of the Soviet-American consultations on the prohibition of chemical weapons, which are being held in accordance with a decision adopted at the Geneva meeting of the leaders of the two countries in November 1985. The fourteenth round of bilateral consultations began on 20 February and is coming to an end today, 8 March. The round was preceded by a meeting between the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, E.A. Shevardnadze, and the United States Secretary of State, J. Baker, from 7 to 9 February in Moscow. At that meeting they adopted a joint statement on chemical weapons which contained an agreed overall framework for achieving the aim of eliminating chemical weapons world wide - an aim which the USSR and the United States consider as one of the most urgent tasks. In this connection, I would like to recall that the documents issuing from the Moscow meetings of the ministers