

Cromartie of the United Kingdom, and the major progress achieved under the guidance of Ambassador Ekéus of Sweden this year. Thanks to their sustained efforts, agreement on a convention on chemical weapons is a distinct certainty. Outstanding issues most certainly remain, such as those relating to verification, including the balance between the demands of a strict, binding verification régime to prevent violations of the proposed convention and, on the other hand, the concern of States to protect vital installations from unwarranted prying. An extended session of the Conference on Disarmament in November this year should be carefully considered if it could accelerate negotiations. Success on this issue would offer a clear example of the capabilities of the CD as a negotiating organ on an issue whose time has come -- an observation also made by the distinguished Foreign Minister of Sweden. Confidence-building measures such as the proposed exchange of visits to chemical facilities have contributed to bring success closer. We are grateful to the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons for innovative initiatives and modalities to speed up work.

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The benefits of the peaceful, rational and equitable exploitation of outer space are perhaps impossible yet to properly assess. However, we already have a more than clear assessment of the dangers perilously imminent in the creeping "weaponization" of outer space. Some 75 per cent of satellites in space are oriented towards military rather than development objectives. Calls for their protection should be examined in relation to the 1975 Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer space. On-site inspection of space objects by an international inspectorate at the point of launch has been suggested as a contribution to prevent the deployment of weapons in space.

The Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union made serious and worthy proposals earlier this month with the object of ensuring that items launched into space are not equipped with weapons.

The proposal of your country, France, Mr. President, in 1978 for an international satellite monitoring agency has been studied intensely and remains on the table. The Canadian presentation on verification and PAXSAT and proposals by China, the German Democratic Republic and Mongolia, Japan and Argentina call for close examination and study in the Ad hoc Committee. Proposals for a comprehensive ASAT weapons ban and revisions to the 1967 outer space Treaty to remedy its shortcomings have also been put forward.

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I want to speak briefly now on the occasion of our move towards the adoption of the progress report of the Group of Scientific Experts, the report that is given in document CD/778, which I assume this Conference will adopt at a later stage today. That report, which was introduced last week by the distinguished Chairman of the GSE, Dr. Dahlman, records that the work of this Group, which has been in existence now for 11 years, continues to be strongly supported by members of this Conference. Nineteen of us took part in the last session of the Group of Scientific Experts, and we were joined by six other States non-members of the Conference on Disarmament. National contributions were made to the work of the GSE by some 27 States. During their work in