

(Mr. Lukman, Nigeria)

Let me now address myself to the work you have done so far in negotiating a convention on the complete elimination of chemical weapons. We are pleased to note the tremendous effort made towards the attainment of this objective. Deep inroads have been made in areas that had been contentious and intractable. The issue of verification, and especially the politically charged question of challenge inspection, have seen substantial progress. Political, legal and institutional matters are also being addressed. This is the edifice on which the future convention will rest and must therefore be given the same consideration and attention as other issues. Of great importance to my Government is the question of universality. Universal adherence to the convention is essential for the complete eradication of chemical weapons. In this regard, the provision of incentives such as assistance and co-operation in economic and technological development is important.

Also of particular importance for the convention is the need to assure States that giving up the right to produce or acquire weapons would not leave a State party at the mercy of non-parties. For this reason nothing could be more reassuring to the States parties, especially the weaker ones, than provision in the future convention for collective and mandatory action in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter against any chemical weapon attack, be it from a State party or a non-party to the convention. This is the most important single inducement that can help to ensure the adherence of the weaker States to the future convention. The international community is anxiously awaiting the conclusion of the convention. There is therefore a need to keep up the momentum that the negotiations have acquired during the past year, so that the convention can be concluded at the earliest date. In this connection, I would like to state that Nigeria has no chemical weapons and does not intend to acquire them in the future.