

(Mr. Hyltenius, Sweden)

I note with satisfaction the improvement of the mandate for our negotiations, as well as the increasing number of participating non-member States.

In parallel to the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, other significant events have taken place. The United Nations has once again urged us to intensify our negotiations on a chemical weapons convention with a view to its final elaboration at the earliest date. Important conferences on chemical weapons have been held in Paris and in Canberra, and a constructive bilateral negotiating process is under way between the two leading military Powers, also in the field of chemical disarmament.

The impetus thus continues to build up. We have yet not had a decisive political breakthrough, but I hope it will come in the near future. Almost all the elements of the text are on the table. It is now primarily, but not exclusively, a matter of taking the necessary political decision in order to move to the final stages of our work. It is therefore with confidence in the opportunity which we now have that I take up my duties as Chairman.

Before concluding this brief statement, I wish to express my sincere thanks for the many pledges of co-operation and support that have been made to me both today and while I have been conducting consultations with my colleagues in preparation for this task. The Committee will start as soon as possible after the adoption of the report on the inter-sessional work. According to present plans it is envisaged that the first meeting of the Ad hoc Committee will be held on Wednesday, 21 February at 3 p.m.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Sweden for his statement. Does any other member wish to take the floor? It seems not.

I should like to recall that, as I indicated at our plenary meeting on Tuesday last, I intend to put before the Conference for adoption at our next plenary meeting on Tuesday, 20 February, the report of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons contained in document CD/961. I wish also to report to you that I am actively continuing my consultations on the re-establishment of the Ad hoc Committee under agenda item 5, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", and I hope that I shall soon be in a position to announce that, thanks to the co-operation of all members, an agreement has been reached on that subject.