

(Mr. Nazarkin, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)

Making public the size of our chemical weapons stockpile is also a step towards further confidence-building. I would like to emphasize that we have taken this step in spite of the fact that the United States binary programme is quite incompatible with the emerging process of confidence building in the chemical weapons field. Yet we are not slamming the door in response to the beginning of the practical implementation of the programme, and we shall continue to strive for the earliest possible agreement on the complete prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons.

Our attitude is based on the fact that progress achieved recently at the negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons has brought this objective so much closer that there can be no going back.

Convincing proof of the fairness of this assessment is the report of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, introduced today by its Chairman, the Ambassador of Sweden, Mr. Ekéus. In this connection, I should like to point out the great personal contribution Ambassador Ekéus has made to the process of widening areas of agreement on the future Convention. The "rolling text" in its present form represents an excellent basis for the very rapid conclusion of work on the Convention. The Soviet delegation considers that it is essential for the work of the ad hoc committee on the prohibition of chemical weapons to resume as soon as possible to avoid any waste of time or loss of momentum in the negotiations, in order to perform an important task: to prepare as rapidly as possible a convention which would completely prohibit one of the types of weapon of mass destruction - chemical weapons.

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(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States of America)

The President of the United States, Ronald Reagan, has conveyed a message to the Conference on Disarmament as it begins its 1988 session. I am pleased to read this message:

- "The Conference on Disarmament has an impressive agenda. Of special importance is your effort on a convention banning chemical weapons. Progress has been made in narrowing differences of principle; you now face the arduous task of working out the details and finding solutions on

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(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States of America)

issues which affect vital security interests of all our countries. General Secretary Gorbachev and I have reaffirmed our commitment to negotiations in the CD which would result in a truly effective, verifiable and global ban on these terrible weapons.