

(Mr. Nasseri, Islamic Republic of Iran)

On the application of Iraq there were many reasons for objections. This is a State which still prides itself in official positions on having extensively used chemical weapons as a justified means of warfare, and is engaged in an aggressive chemical weapon production, development and stockpiling programme. Not a single sign thus far that they intend to reverse their decisions and policies regarding this matter - not a single sign.

We have been told that these States should be allowed in, so as to remove any possible excuse for a possible eventual refusal to join the convention. But is there any assurance in this? If we base our work on removing excuses for those who are only looking for excuses, we have probably entrapped ourselves in a never-ending process. Nonetheless, we have decided not to oppose their application for this year, after having received assurances from members and non-members alike that this is not an isolated move but a part of a collection of activities to ensure the universality of the convention and to help eradicate chemical weapons from the world and from our region. The sincere desire of many States which have approached us in the last weeks, along with the dedicated efforts of Ambassador Wagenmakers, have thus contributed to our decision.

I shall add as a personal note that this decision is also a gesture of goodwill to Iraq, which, through reciprocation, may lead to co-operation in other international issues, activities and organizations as well as contributing to peace and security in our region.

I can only reiterate at the end, as the President underlined, that this decision is limited to the current year. The matter stands to be reviewed and reassessed next year within the guidelines that the President set forward.