

(Mrs. Theorin, Sweden)

- The agreement at the Stockholm Conference in 1986 on confidence- and security-building measures in Europe, and progress in negotiations on a convention on chemical weapons, illustrate a dynamic multilateral process. The breakthrough made on important aspects of the verification issue gives hope for new opportunities to conclude disarmament agreements.

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Over the years, major efforts have been made by the members of this Conference to negotiate a multilateral convention on the complete and effective prohibition of chemical weapons.

The early and successful conclusion of these negotiations is now crucially important. Chemical weapons are being developed, produced and used. Failure to reach an agreement soon on a total ban on these frightful weapons would greatly increase the risk of further proliferation, horizontal as well as vertical, with grave consequences for the international community.

Complete and effective international prohibition would, on the other hand, improve the security of nations. Furthermore, such a convention would amount to a breakthrough in multilateral disarmament diplomacy. It would eradicate a whole class of weapons of mass destruction. It would break new ground in the field of international verification. And it would clearly establish the Conference on Disarmament as a capable and viable multilateral negotiating forum for security and disarmament matters.

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