

(Mr. Rautenbach, South Africa)

and structured so as to ensure a fine balance of compromises. In this regard I would like to extend my delegation's appreciation to Ambassador von Wagner, his delegation and the other collaborators, including the secretariat, for a task well done.

Several States have some reservations about parts of the draft convention. South Africa would also have wished for a different wording of certain sections, for example a more substantial and detailed exposition of the criteria for the seats on the executive council. As regards the ratio of regional seats on the executive council, South Africa would have wished for a more distinct reflection of the fact that Africa is the region with the largest number of States. However, broad consensus about these preferences was unfortunately not possible. We hope that even those States which do not now see their way open to find mechanisms to sign the convention will in due course be able to reach a different conclusion. The effectiveness of the convention will depend on its universality and on the elimination of the threat posed by chemical weapons in toto. It is in this spirit that the draft convention is acceptable to South Africa.

The chemical weapons convention heralds a new era in the field of multilateral disarmament. The enhanced system of confidence-building measures and verification regimes, and above all the integrity of its application to all States equally, will hopefully prepare the ground for future mechanisms in other areas of disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament can build proudly on its achievements. A sound framework for the task ahead, however, will require adjustments to the structure and agenda of the Conference. These have to be addressed by members and observers alike. South Africa is ready and willing to consult and cooperate with you, Mr. President, in this regard.

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Mr. TSEGAYE (Ethiopia):

... As Ethiopia is fully committed to the cause of global security and peace, my delegation attaches great importance to the draft convention on the elimination of chemical weapons, which represents a significant achievement of the Conference on Disarmament after two decades of difficult negotiations. Through you, Mr. President, I would like to convey to His Excellency Ambassador von Wagner, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, the appreciation of my delegation for his indefatigable efforts and the skilful leadership he has demonstrated in the negotiations resulting in the draft chemical weapons convention before us. Hoping that the draft convention will be approved by the Conference and duly forwarded to the forty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly for adoption, I would like to express, as I did in the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, my delegation's regret that Africa has been excluded from the rotating seat in