

(Mr. González, Chile)

we hope that many other countries will do the same. In this respect the Mendoza agreement, in addition to reaffirming the various unilateral declarations on the non-possession of chemical weapons, refers to the decision to cooperate closely to expedite the conclusion of the convention and to sign it simultaneously as original parties, as well as the intention to institute appropriate measures to monitor substances defined as precursors of chemical warfare agents and the study of mechanisms necessary to ensure compliance with the commitment entered into, until such time as the future convention comes into force. In a similar area, readiness is expressed to look into systems that would help to strengthen the verification machinery under the convention on the prohibition of biological and toxin weapons. Finally, the hope is expressed that other States of the region will endorse the content of this declaration.

It is clear that in various bodies and forums, Latin America is taking major, effective steps forward as regards disarmament problems, arms control and the creation of a climate of mutual trust as expressed in agreements such as the Mendoza agreement, which contribute indirectly but in a meaningful way to strengthening true security based on the elimination of conflict scenarios and their replacement by the promotion of democracy and human rights in the region. In this connection, Chile attaches great importance to regional confidence-building measures, and in this respect has noted with interest the initiative launched by the President of Peru for the holding in Lima next November of a meeting of the foreign ministers of the member countries of the Rio Group aimed at beginning studies and exchanges of views for the purpose of reaching agreement on limiting conventional military arsenals involving high-technology weapons, as well as other matters deemed to be of interest.

As this Conference prepares to adopt a new report to be submitted to the General Assembly containing a summary of the debates and progress made in its subsidiary bodies during this period, allow me to refer to the statement made in this very room on 8 February 1990 by the then representative of Brazil, who, happily, is with us today, Ambassador Marcos Castrioto de Azambuja, who is now Secretary-General in the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. With great vision he said:

"Unless we effectively broaden our working agenda, this Conference could shrink to no more than a de facto preparatory committee for the future convention on chemical weapons, and only later seek new missions to accomplish. This is a minimalist approach and one that falls far short of the expectations of the international community, one that would make a mockery of our many declarations and resolutions and one fraught with the danger of the long agony of a progressively more enfeebled negotiating body."

He went on to add that "the time has come for aggressively creative new thinking, and ... we have 'in-house' the ability and the experience to suggest ways and means for our renewal and for enduring perhaps even greater usefulness in a dramatically altered international political environment."