

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

... High on the list of priorities of the Conference on Disarmament is the item dealing with chemical weapons. I shall focus most of my remarks today on this item. At the outset, I wish to pay tribute to the tireless efforts of the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, Ambassador Pierre Morel, and also to thank the members of his delegation as well as Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail and his assistants, for their very meticulous work. I wish also to thank the five chairmen of the working groups entrusted with the preparation of the convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons.

The first session of the Conference on Disarmament to follow the Paris Conference is almost coming to an end. In Paris, 149 States, including all members of the Conference on Disarmament, solemnly called on the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva "to redouble its efforts, as a matter of urgency, to resolve expeditiously the remaining issues and to conclude the convention at the earliest date". However, a breakthrough towards a comprehensive convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons seems at present to be still beyond our reach.

Though Egypt recognizes that a considerable degree of progress has been achieved, we do however realize that we still have a long way ahead. Many of the remaining differences, as my delegation has stated on more than one occasion, are not confined to mere drafting refinements.

Today, I wish to put before this body my delegation's reading of the balance-sheet of this session. The first issue I will address pertains to the relation of the chemical weapons convention to other relevant international agreements. Our understanding, which has already been stated in the CD, is that in accordance with the general rules of international law, the chemical weapons convention, from the moment of its entry into force, should prevail over any existing international agreement covering the same subject-matter. In the view of my delegation, our work would be undone if unilaterally declared "rights" under the 1925 Geneva Protocol were to be transferred and

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