

(Mr. Hou, China)

We are very happy to see that some important improvements have been made in the new mandate. The phrase "except for its final drafting" has been deleted and the constructive formulation "at the earliest date", taken from the Final Declaration of the Paris Conference, has been incorporated. We have a positive evaluation of this achievement. At the same time we share the regret of the Group of 21 that we have not been able to achieve consensus on the inclusion of the important term "prohibition of use" in the mandate. I would like to say that the Chinese delegation has not changed its principled position that the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons should be included in the future comprehensive convention. Consensus on the inclusion of the prohibition of use in the convention was achieved in the early 1980s, and is already reflected in the "rolling text". We hope that this agreement will be embodied in the work of the new Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. We would like once again to express our hope that the constructive consultations and co-operative spirit among member States will enable the negotiations in the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons and in the Conference as a whole to achieve new progress.

Mr. REESE (Australia): The Western Group welcomes the re-establishment of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons under a mandate which, we believe, will enable the negotiations to proceed at full pace. We note that some differences remain among delegations in regard to the mandate. These can always be further addressed in the life of the Ad hoc Committee.

We would like to congratulate Ambassador Hyltenius on his appointment as Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee. We know his qualities well, and see him as a most fitting successor to Ambassador Morel. I assure him that the Western Group looks forward to the closest co-operation with him in expediting the negotiations in this critical year as we move closer to the completion of a chemical weapons convention.

Mr. HYLTEINIUS (Sweden): I wish to take this opportunity to express my thanks to you, Mr. President, for your kind words, and to all my colleagues for their good wishes in connection with my appointment as Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. I am grateful for the trust placed in my country and my delegation and in me personally. I am very much aware of the great responsibility which this task entails, and I can assure you that I will spare no effort to live up to this responsibility.

The convention is clearly within reach, thanks to the contributions made by all delegations and by the chairmen of the Ad hoc Committee. I should like to pay tribute in particular to my predecessor, Ambassador Morel, who led the work of the Committee in a very active and skilful manner. He embodied both the letter and the spirit of the Paris Declaration and made us literally redouble our efforts. Considerable progress was made on a number of issues, and this is in large measure due to the untiring efforts by Ambassador Morel and his working group chairmen.