

(Mr. Kosin, Yugoslavia)

... The non-aligned countries, since their first Summit Conference in Belgrade a quarter of a century ago, have always considered disarmament a politically comprehensive and priority issue of peace and security. Such an approach dominated their meetings held in the course of last year, in particular the Eighth Conference of Heads of State or Government, held in Harare, Zimbabwe, in September 1986. The more than 100 Heads of State or Government of non-aligned countries assembled there have -- in their Political Declaration -- spelt out their views about the issues on the agenda of our Conference.

They urged all States to abstain from any action that could impede an early conclusion of a chemical weapons convention.

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(Mr. Kosin, Yugoslavia)

... We expect that the work of the Conference -- which last year proceeded in a very business-like atmosphere on constructive and concrete approaches to individual agenda items, and on substantive and accelerated negotiations as regards the chemical-weapons ban -- will in 1987 become more intensive and meaningful. Yugoslavia, for its part, and in accordance with its views and positions of principle, will make every effort to have the Conference attain these goals.

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(Mr. Kosin, Yugoslavia)

The work on the elaboration of the chemical weapons convention in the course of the 1986 session of the Conference provides, in many respects, an example of how we should proceed on other agenda items. The outgoing Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, Ambassador Cromartie of the United Kingdom, and the Chairmen of the Working Groups deserve the credit for the results presented in the report adopted by the Conference. But despite these significant steps, progress is still very slow on a number of major issues and some key problems remain outstanding. We expect, therefore, that the incoming Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, Ambassador Ekéus of Sweden -- whose ability and competence are well known -- together with all the delegations will make a constructive effort to speed up the negotiations. In my view, the conditions for this do exist, even concerning the most sensitive issues, such as verification. We consider that the proposals presented so far offer a solid basis for negotiated solutions.

We must be aware that expectations are especially high in this field: all the more so, as six decades have elapsed since the chemical-weapons ban was introduced for the sake of humanity and human dignity, and we can no longer make excuses for further delays.

Greater involvement on the part of all of us is an imperative today.