

(Mr. Nazarkin, USSR)

We note with satisfaction, that responding to the call by the Paris Conference, a number of countries have for the first time submitted requests to participate in the chemical weapons negotiations as observers. Bringing new participants into the negotiations, in our opinion, proves on the one hand that the negotiations have entered a decisive phase, and on the other should contribute to the elaboration of a truly global convention. We agree with those who believe that it is necessary to concentrate the efforts of the Conference now on finalizing the elaboration of the convention on chemical weapons. This, however, should not justify marking time in other areas of the Conference's work. The fact that the Conference on Disarmament has so far been unable to begin practical work on banning nuclear tests is absolutely inadmissible. I would like to recall that the United Nations General Assembly has called upon the Conference on Disarmament to begin substantive work on all aspects of such a treaty at this year's session. In our opinion the basis for such work is contained in the "Basic provisions of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of nuclear weapon tests", advanced jointly by the USSR and other socialist countries in June 1987. The Soviet delegation believes that it would be possible at the present stage to focus on verification issues and put into practice the proposal made by the USSR Minister for Foreign Affairs, E.A. Shevardnadze, for the establishment of a special group of scientific experts to prepare as soon as possible practical proposals on a system of monitoring the non-conduct of nuclear tests. We favour the early drawing up of a treaty on the complete and general prohibition of tests, and believe that under the present circumstances, a step-by-step approach to resolving this problem is justifiable as well. In our opinion, the Soviet-American talks on nuclear testing, which are based on such a step-by-step approach, do not replace multilateral efforts in this field. These two processes should be mutually complementary and lead to a single final result.

(The President)

I had hoped today to be able also to re-establish the ad hoc committees on chemical weapons and on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, but unfortunately consultations have not yet produced results. However, I know that members are consulting actively, and it is my hope that we will succeed soon, so that the Conference might adopt the relevant decision at the plenary meeting next Thursday. I shall be happy if we are able to do so, as the secretariat is processing draft decisions on the participation of non-members in both ad hoc committees, under items 4 and 5, and I am sure that you will all agree with me that invitations to them to participate in our work should be extended at the earliest possible date.