

(Mr. Morel, France)

the strong and clear call made in the Final Declaration of the Paris Conference on the prohibition of chemical weapons. All delegations, those of the member countries of the Conference as well as those of the non-member countries - of which we have twice as many as last year - redoubled their efforts, and I take this opportunity to thank them for their readiness to work, their contributions and their encouragement.

The second comment is that as a result of this sustained work, the report I am introducing today provides you with a markedly improved draft convention. The thematic approach adopted this year by the Committee made it possible to cover all the aspects of the convention, to link them together and to put them in better order, the result being that today we have a more complete, more coherent and more methodical text. Does this mean - and here I come to my third point - that we are close to our goal? It may be tempting to note that the negotiations did not enable us to achieve the necessary "breakthrough" during this session, that the "point of no return was not reached", or that we dwelt too long on technical considerations rather than devising the "political package" which is essential for concluding our task. I am the first to regret that it was not possible to go even further, but at the same time I believe that the clichés to which I have just referred do not really give a true picture of the real state of affairs in the negotiations. The more we redouble our efforts, the more clearly we can see that we can only progress if there is a proper combination of political initiatives and technical improvements, both of which are essential and inseparable. The chemical weapons convention will be an extremely complicated document which will have to have solid scientific, technical and industrial foundations, while at the same time setting down unprecedented rules for security.

How in this light can we describe the work done by the Committee during the recent session? It seems to me that the bulk of the technical infrastructure of the convention is now in place, and that the substantial political headway we have recorded this year make it possible to properly define the general régime of the future convention.

After these opening comments, I would now like to describe briefly the principal results in terms of the five main subject categories which were covered by the five working groups. On the subject of verification in all its forms, we had a particularly heavy agenda. First of all I should mention the insertion of an annex on confidentiality in appendix I, which at a stroke allows us to deal substantively with a question which, even a year ago, was more often than not referred as "to be discussed". This document makes it possible to lighten the body of the convention and at the same time to meet the present and future concerns of Governments and enterprises, but also those of the technical secretariat. In the same way, Group 1 made progress on inspection procedures, and should be able, before the beginning of the next session, to complete the conversion of the directives for the international inspectorate, which are still contained in appendix I, into a protocol on inspection procedures which for the time being is contained in appendix II, which will give a more precise and more complete definition of the working conditions for the future inspectors.