

(Mr. Sharma, India)

Let me now turn to the subject of the chemical weapons negotiations. The Final Declaration of the Paris Conference provided an auspicious beginning to our work this year. The support could not have been more clearly stated than in the commitment voiced by 149 States that urged the Conference on Disarmament to conclude negotiations at the earliest possible date. The necessary framework to deal with the pending issues was also set up through the resourceful and methodical leadership provided by the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee, Ambassador Morel, and the five working group chairmen. Yet, as the session draws to a close and we take stock of the situation, our feelings are mixed. Undeniably we have made some progress but, against the background of political will and the sense of urgency expressed in the Paris Declaration, in the negotiating framework and the resources provided to us, it has been modest.

The optimism reflected in Paris was diluted, as was seen by the inability of the Conference to reach consensus on a minor updating of the mandate in February. This cast a shadow, which is evidenced by the fact that although during the last six months a considerable amount of work has been done, we have been unable to come closer to solutions regarding a few crucial outstanding issues. My Minister, addressing the Conference on Disarmament on 14 February this year, sounded a note of caution when he stated:

"At present, we observe that far too much time in the Ad hoc Committee is devoted to technical details which divert attention from the political issues that still remain to be resolved. Such details could be identified and resolved by the preparatory commission. The time has come for us to look forward and move with vigour and decisiveness. A clear approach would in itself provide a positive thrust to negotiations in the CD."

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