

(Mr. González, Chile)

... First of all we must note the renewed impetus of the negotiations for the conclusion of a convention banning chemical weapons once and for all, to the extent that it is no longer illusory to think that the work on this matter can be finalized during the course of next year. The extension of the negotiating mandate, the progress made on vital articles such as articles I and II and the intensive discussions on verification and challenge inspection are tangible examples of this. This is solely the result of the flexibility shown by the delegations of the United States and the Soviet Union in withdrawing their proposals on maintaining a percentage of their stockpiles and on the right to retaliate. We are therefore witnessing a clear case where bilateral initiatives, far from replacing multilateralism, strengthen it in a constructive fashion, so that the Conference on Disarmament, the sole negotiating body in the United Nations system, can attain its important goals.

Chile, like the entire international community, is convinced of the imperative need to conclude as soon as possible an agreement banning the manufacture, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons. In previous statements and in its response to the outline for the exchange of basic data proposed by Germany, it has clearly reiterated that it does not produce nor does it intend to produce this type of weapon, as I wish to reaffirm on this occasion. In that respect, and in order to show the determination guiding us in these areas, I am pleased to announce in this Conference that my country has initiated domestic legislative procedures for the withdrawal of the reservations entered by Chile when it ratified the Geneva Protocol of 1925.

The step that we have taken in this field is, as we see it, a sign of our faith in the results achieved in the negotiations to which I have referred, and also a measure aimed at increasing international and regional trust. We are encouraged to note that several States that had entered similar reservations are prepared to adopt similar measures and we appeal to those that have not yet done so to do likewise so that at the signing of the convention on chemical weapons there will be no reservations to the Geneva Protocol. It is also a particular pleasure for my Government to announce that, as the distinguished Ambassador of Brazil has already said, tomorrow, 5 September, in the city of Mendoza, together with Argentina and Brazil, a joint declaration will be signed on the complete prohibition of chemical and biological weapons, which is clear evidence of the political will which spurs our countries on in our efforts to create real conditions for peace and international stability. At the same time, we particularly welcome the fact that the Government of Uruguay will be joining in that commitment and

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