

(Mr. Ledogar, United States)

... Since the CD concluded its 1989 session, the pace of arms control and disarmament negotiations has quickened at all levels - bilateral, regional, and multilateral. Secretary of State James Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnadze have met several times. These meetings have produced agreement on a number of arms control issues that we hope will help pave the way for progress on many fronts. Activities have not been limited, however, to bilateral meetings. Recently in Vienna the NATO countries have tabled yet again a series of new proposals to expedite early agreement on conventional force reductions in Europe. Also in the Vienna negotiations on confidence- and security-building measures, military leaders of the European countries, United States and Canada, have concluded earlier this month an unprecedented exchange of views on military doctrine, including on force structure, and military training. In Ottawa, the 23 countries of NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization have come together to begin consideration of modalities for opening their skies to reciprocal, unarmed aerial surveillance flights, conducted on a routine basis - another great step towards increased openness and transparency. And in our own area, last September the Canberra Government-Industry Conference against Chemical Weapons brought together for the first time large numbers of government officials and chemical industry representatives.

As many speakers before me at this session have already noted, we are living in a time of profound change and opportunity. In our Conference, we have new possibilities to consolidate change and transition to a more peaceful world. It is our responsibility to seize these opportunities and make the most of them, and - if we can - to undertake new, binding commitments that can enhance global stability and security.

There are, of course, still disturbing trends. My Government, for example, is deeply concerned at the current proliferation of technologies that threaten peace and can lead to regional instabilities. We still have much to do. The Conference on Disarmament, as a multilateral negotiating body with representation from all regions of the globe, must continue to play its vital role.

Among the issues on the CD's agenda, the negotiation on a comprehensive, multilateral chemical weapons convention is a particularly high priority for the United States and others. President Bush is personally committed to the achievement of a chemical weapons convention at the earliest date, and you are

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