

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

With your permission, Mr. President, I would like to conclude on a personal note. I had the honour to serve in the Egyptian delegation to the CCD in the mid-1970s, as you rightly pointed out. I was away from Geneva for 11 years. When I came back, four years ago, a glance at the Conference on Disarmament files and proceedings was sufficient to reveal that no progress whatsoever had been achieved in a whole decade. No doubt, all the members of the CD realized this fact, and there was an atmosphere of general disappointment. I am happy to state that today, when I am in the process of relinquishing my post in Geneva, I leave with feelings of hope and great expectations for the work of the Conference on Disarmament and for the efforts exerted to achieve disarmament in general. Several important developments have transformed our contemporary world in recent years. Suffice it to mention the general relaxation between the super-Powers and the oft-referred-to attempts to revise the Charter of the United Nations and to make a genuine attempt to resuscitate its provisions relating to the maintenance of international peace and security. Moreover, several important agreements in the nuclear field have been concluded, and when it comes to the chemical weapons convention, there is a general agreement that the light at the end of the tunnel is now glowing brighter. Here I must confess that I envy you, distinguished members of the Conference on Disarmament, for you will soon witness the fruition of these long and arduous negotiations. I take leave of you, Mr. President, and look forward to seeing all of you next October in New York and to cooperating once more with you, in our joint endeavours to create a better world for future generations.