

(Mr. Evans, Australia)

I said at the outset that I came here today not to harangue you but to work with you. Let me again say that both the compromise text I have tabled and the forward process I have advocated are, in our judgement, essential to the early achievement of a convention, and that the consequences of not achieving a convention quickly will be very grave. Let me just say again what those consequences are. There are three of them. A certainly heightened security risk - there will be some individual countries at very grave risk indeed. Secondly, there will be a much less certain trading environment for chemicals - a particularly serious problem for the countries of the developing world. And thirdly, there will be a massive loss of confidence in the capacity of cooperative multilateralism to produce solutions that are worth having to problems that must be solved. You really will need to bear these considerations very carefully in mind in the period ahead.

Of course history will make its judgements on your efforts. But in the much shorter term all of our Governments will be having to make judgements about our national interests, based on assessments of whether you can soon deliver an instrument of utility to us.

Australia has always been a strong supporter of, and an active participant in, the Conference on Disarmament. We have redoubled our efforts in recent months, and I hope that our efforts are being matched by others. We certainly look forward to an exhilarating few months, under wise guidance from Ambassador von Wagner and in the company of genuinely committed colleagues, as we finish these long and complex negotiations.

The stakes are as high as they could be. A completed chemical weapons convention will be the most important multilateral arms control and disarmament achievement in history.