

(Mr. Sharma, India)

... The stagnation in the process of negotiations on the agenda items mentioned above is not due to inherent faults in the Conference on Disarmament, which is an institution of our times and subject to the policies of the Governments that make up the CD. If the CD has not lived up to the hopes that accompanied its birth, it is largely a reflection of our individual and collective failings. On the positive side of our efforts, we have the negotiations towards a chemical weapons convention. We are happy to note that the efforts of Ambassador Morel of France, as Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons last year, are being matched this year by his able successor, Ambassador Hyltenius of Sweden, as we move forward towards a convention. We welcome the bilateral agreement between the United States and the USSR on the destruction of their CW stocks and CW production facilities, which has undoubtedly given impetus to our work in the CD.

Our common aim is the conclusion of a comprehensive and effectively verifiable convention which ensures that all existing chemical weapons stocks and chemical weapons production facilities are eliminated and that further development, production, acquisition, transfer and use of these weapons is prohibited. If we want a convention that will attract universal adherence, it should be non-discriminatory and should provide for equal rights and obligations for all States, whether or not they possess chemical weapons and whether or not they have a large chemical industry. The convention should ensure the unimpeded right of States parties to develop, produce, use, exchange and transfer chemicals and technology for peaceful purposes and should not hinder or impede international co-operation in peaceful areas of chemical industry development. If the proposed convention is to build on the 1925 Geneva Protocol, it should be able to abrogate the "right" to retaliatory or second use of chemical weapons as long as these weapons exist after the entry into force of the convention, i.e., during the 10-year destruction period. Otherwise, we would be left, during this period, with a fragile and inefficient system which would undermine the possibility of attracting universal adherence to the convention. The provisions of article X, on assistance, should be adequate to deter any possible aggressor against a State party to the convention. Adherence to an international agreement cannot be forced. But it can be urged by demonstrating the advantages of the system of collective security offered by disarmament.

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