

(Mr. von Arx, Switzerland)

future members, its future States parties. Henceforward there are no longer two classes of States, full members and observers. Henceforward all of us who intend to sign and ratify this convention have the same rights and responsibilities to contribute to its future destiny. This, it seems to us, is a prerequisite for a new regime that will be as universal as possible.

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Mr. BATSANOV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): First of all, Mr. President, I would like to join in the congratulations which have been addressed to you by all the colleagues who have spoken before me. Today is indeed a special day for our Conference. Not only a regular cycle of work but, it may be said without exaggeration, a whole epoch is coming to an end. For the first time in the last 16 years, the Conference is ready to report to the General Assembly of the United Nations not only on the content of discussions held in the Conference, not only on routine progress made in resolving a particular issue, but on an agreement unprecedented in scope, in the solutions applied to complex political and technical problems: the draft convention on chemical weapons. This is even more than a draft agreement to prohibit and eliminate one of the most dangerous types of weapon of mass destruction. It embodies new approaches to verification and to many other "traditional" disarmament problems, which are in keeping with the spirit of the times. It is also a great satisfaction that we have, for the first time, a draft agreement which is the result of truly multilateral efforts, although, of course, some have contributed more and others less at one stage or another. At this point I would like to draw particular attention to the role played this year by two countries: Germany, which led the negotiations in the Ad Hoc Committee, and Australia, which took the side of being the first to go beyond what had become the accustomed framework of the "rolling text" and propose an entire, simpler and more understandable draft convention, thus showing the way by which we finally arrived at today's result.

On the whole, we cannot but be satisfied at the completion of the essential work on a convention for which we unswervingly supported and continue to support the idea of the fastest possible conclusion. The Russian delegation did all it could to bring this moment closer, taking an active part in the search for solutions to the puzzles that until just recently seemed difficult to solve. It is no secret, however, that many provisions of the convention have not turned out to be as we would wish to see them; nor is it a secret that some of these provisions have presented very serious difficulties for our Government. Our delegation was instructed to speak directly about this, about these difficulties, during the discussion of the draft convention in the Ad Hoc Committee. I would remind you that we are referring to the wording of article IV, paragraph 16, and article V, paragraph 19, laying down the principle that the costs of international verification are met by the inspected party, and to the definition of specialized equipment, which is so broad as to call into question the practical possibility of converting chemical weapons production facilities. In both cases our objections are based on strictly economic grounds, and therefore we would prefer now to leave these questions open and try to resolve them before the convention is signed.