

(Mr. Neagu, Romania)

My country, which is unequivocally committed to the achievement of a total and comprehensive banning of chemical weapons, repeatedly declared in the last year and a half that it possessed no chemical weapons or had the means of producing them, nor the intention to acquire them. The Romanian Government wants to become an original party to the chemical weapons convention.

I am pleased to announce here today that as far as chemical weapons are concerned, and more specifically the 1925 Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, the Romanian Parliament adopted last month a law on the withdrawal of the reservations made to the text of the Protocol a long time ago. This month, Romania officially notified France, as the depositary country, about the withdrawal of these reservations.

We support the proposal made by our Austrian colleague that countries which still have such reservations should withdraw them collectively and, in order to come to such an arrangement, a special meeting of the concerned countries be convened. We also share the view that this could be done during the envisaged ministerial meeting on chemical weapons.

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... The war in the Gulf has also demonstrated the dangers of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction: the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons, the spread of nuclear weapons and of ballistic missiles, the related question of arms transfers and the arms trade. Constraining the supply and availability of weapons of mass destruction, and of the materials needed for their manufacture, should be a priority task. Such constraints would undoubtedly reduce the risks posed by nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and the ballistic missile systems that can deliver them. It is our belief that the renunciation of weapons of mass destruction and the commitment to their non-proliferation should also include missile technology.

Romania has been actively participating since the beginning of last year in the current multilateral efforts to strengthen the global non-proliferation regime. To this end, my Government expressed its readiness to join the Nuclear Suppliers Group and, as a result, last spring Romania was invited to take part in the work of this forum as a full member. In the same spirit my country decided to accept the guidelines of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and to accede to this Group next autumn. We have close relations with the members of the Australia Group, working to increase the effectiveness of its control on chemical and biological materials.