

(Ms. Theorin, Sweden)

responsibility of the major Powers in the Conference on Disarmament are crucial to the successful conclusion of a Convention. Their concerns and approaches to the issues involved cannot be overlooked. Direct talks between the United States and the Soviet Union have proved useful in the past. Such contacts could and should reinforce and speed up the negotiating process.

Chemical weapons are, however, at least theoretically, accessible to all States, should they choose to acquire them. Furthermore, all States are potential victims of the use of such weapons. Consequently, the future Convention must be elaborated in such a way that the concerns and interests of States from all parts of the world are met. This can only be done in a multilateral context. All members of the Conference on Disarmament should therefore make full use of this multilateral negotiating forum.

There are other initiatives, outside the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, which are intended as steps towards ridding the world of chemical weapons. Certain statements indicate that efforts are under way to prevent the spread of chemical weapons. The proposal to create a chemical-weapon-free zone in Europe is another initiative, which is important from a political point of view.

Sweden is strongly in favour of all efforts that can diminish the threat of chemical weapons in Europe as well as in other parts of the world. At the same time we remain convinced that the most effective way of achieving this is through a comprehensive convention like that being negotiated in this forum. Geographically or otherwise limited initiatives should not become alternative solutions, but should be pursued in such a manner that they support and strengthen the multilateral negotiations of a comprehensive convention. Enough substantial and preparatory work has already been done for such a convention to be feasible within a reasonably near future. No additional measures would then be needed.

In order to further the negotiations, all countries producing or considering producing chemical weapons -- binary or others -- should refrain from such production during the negotiations on a convention. Disarmament can never be furthered through increased armaments.