

(Mr. Voicu, Romania)

In view of the progress made to date by the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, we consider it necessary during this session to stress the advance of negotiations on the draft convention on the prohibition and destruction of all chemical weapons. The convention should be an international legal instrument designed as a step in the direction of prohibiting and eliminating all weapons of mass destruction. We welcome the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons and hope that it will work fruitfully throughout this session of the Conference.

The adoption of preventive measures for the non-proliferation of chemical weapons in chemical-weapon-free zones, in order to strengthen efforts to swiftly establish a universal convention on the prohibition and destruction of all chemical weapons, would be particularly useful in promoting confidence in the reduction and elimination of those weapons. The Declaration-Appeal of the President of the Socialist Republic of Romania, Nicolae Ceausescu, and of the President of the State Council of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, Todor Jivkov, concerning the creation of a chemical-weapon-free zone in the Balkans is particularly relevant here. It proposes that negotiations be undertaken without delay to establish an agreement among the Balkan States banning the testing, production, acquisition and stockpiling on their territory of all chemical weapons, as an effective contribution to confining the proliferation of chemical weapons on our planet. That Declaration-Appeal has been circulated for the Conference as document CD/648.

CD/PV.339

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(Mr. Qian Jiadong, China)

The prohibition of chemical weapons has long been considered as the most promising item on the agenda, and the reality fully bears this out. We have already entered the stage of developing and working out a draft convention on the complete prohibition of chemical weapons, and we have been rid of the trouble of redrafting a mandate for the relevant subsidiary body every year. Like many other delegations, we are pleased to see that, thanks to the efforts of Ambassador Turbanski, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, and all the co-ordinators, further progress was made during the January resumed session of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. We have also taken note that the two countries with the largest chemical-weapon arsenals have both expressed their willingness to speed up the negotiations to conclude a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons. Their representatives have made it clear that their bilateral talks are only aimed at facilitating the multilateral negotiations and they have no intention to supplant them. All this, we believe, is conducive to our work.

However, blind optimism will do us no good. We have to keep a sober mind on the fact that tremendous work has yet to be done, and divergences on some key issues still remain. The question of verification, especially challenge verification, is one of the thorny problems calling for greater