

(Mr. Gonsalves, India)

One group of States in the Conference has quite blatantly suggested that the Conference can legitimately hope to substantively tackle only the issue of a chemical weapons convention. The progress that is being made in this area alone is sought to be cited as satisfactory evidence that the Conference is in fact discharging its responsibilities. It is of course true that there have been several important contributions on this subject and I would particularly like to thank the Netherlands Government for the valuable workshop it arranged in June. There has been general agreement that the Ad hoc Committee on this subject under the able stewardship of Ambassador Cromartie has made reasonable progress during the current year and it is gratifying to note the expression of hope on either side of the ideological divide that an agreed CW convention can be presented to the forty-second session of the General Assembly. We are ourselves considerably less optimistic. While we hear reports of useful

(Mr. Gonsalves, India)

bilateral super-Power exchanges on this subject we regret the persistent tendency not to share the results of these exchanges with the Conference on Disarmament. We have at the same time heard the complaint that participation in the work of the Ad hoc Committee is not adequately representative to ensure the conclusion of a convention acceptable to all. In our view this situation is in no way related to or responsible for the continuing sharp differences on verification and other issues between the parties possessing the largest stockpiles. These differences can be resolved only if they display a much higher degree of mutual confidence and accommodation than has been the case so far. There is thus much ground to be covered if we are to attain the goal of a CW convention. We cannot in any case satisfy the expectant international community with the assurance that the only issue on which we are registering some progress is chemical weapons more particularly since the role of these weapons in the global military strategies of the two alliances is essentially of a secondary if not marginal character.