

Mr. HERDER (German Democratic Republic): Comrade Chairman, in the general statement I made on 8 February here, I declared that it was my delegation's intention to express our views in a more detailed manner on the items of the agenda of the Committee on Disarmament, in the course of this annual session. My statement today will be devoted to the item on the prohibition of chemical weapons.

The German Democratic Republic continues to attach high priority to the complete prohibition of chemical weapons. In the recent Prague Declaration my country, together with the other Warsaw Treaty member States, advocated that this Committee accelerate the elaboration of an international convention on the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons.

In my statement delivered on 8 February my delegation has already expressed some ideas on how this goal can be achieved. Today I would like to elaborate on our basic approach to the work of the Committee on Disarmament in the field of chemical weapons.

In the view of the delegation of the German Democratic Republic as well as many others, it is now high time for the Committee to proceed to actual drafting work with regard to a chemical weapons convention. All prerequisites for such an endeavour exist.

Firstly, we have before us quite a number of comprehensive proposals with regard to a chemical weapons convention. Let me only mention the documents tabled by the socialist countries, Japan, the United Kingdom, the joint documents by the USSR and the United States as well as the Soviet "Basic provisions".

The papers submitted in recent years by the consecutive chairmen of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Chemical Weapons have been most helpful for advancing our work. The valuable "Views of the Chairman on a chemical weapons convention" submitted last year by Ambassador Sujka (CD/333) deserve particular praise. The same applies to the interesting papers reflecting the work done in the contact groups set up by Ambassador Sujka (CD/334, Annex). Now also the views of the United States on a chemical weapons ban have been tabled.

Consequently, there is enough material to be processed in drafting the convention.

Secondly, the mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Chemical Weapons which was agreed upon last year and to which, after all, every delegation gave its consent, provides for the elaboration of a convention. Thus, the work of the Committee on Disarmament, and in particular of its Working Group, can no longer be limited to a mere systematization of views and positions or lengthy discussions on certain questions. Now, the Committee should really start discharging its political negotiating role concerning a chemical weapons convention. It stands to reason that negotiations entail more than just reflections on working papers tabled in this Committee.