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(Mr. Butler, Australia)

The conclusion of an effective and verifiable convention banning chemical weapons is a goal Australia has long advocated. We are firmly of the view that to be fully effective a new Chemical Weapons Convention should be comprehensive in scope and contain a clear ban on the use of chemical weapons as well as on their development, acquisition, stockpiling, retention or transfer. We are encouraged by the outcome of the recently concluded three-week session of the Chemical Weapons Working Group in that agreement was reached on a mandate for the Group's continuing work during 1984 providing for the negotiation and formulation of a convention. We recognize that areas of divergence remain. But we believe these can be overcome especially if there is a political will to conclude a convention.

We expect that the work of the Conference will be very greatly assisted by the draft treaty for the complete and verifiable elimination of chemical weapons on a global basis which the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Schultz, has said will be presented to this Conference shortly and we applaud this American initiative. We also wish to express Australia's appreciation to the United States for conducting the workshop on the destruction of chemical weapons in Utah in November last year. We regard this workshop as having been a very constructive initiative in the important areas of techniques for and verification of stockpile destruction. It simply demonstrated what can and should be achieved in these areas. We can move steadily forward during our 1984 session to the conclusion of a chemical weapons convention. This would be a significant achievement, and it must be done. We fully endorse the recommendation contained in the Chemical Weapons Working Group's report which would enable that work to recommence as a matter of priority at the current session of this conference.

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(Mr. Dhanapala, Sri Lanka)

We are not at all pessimistic about the future course of our session despite the difficulties we see before us. My delegation was encouraged by the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Chemical Weapons ably chaired by Ambassador McPhail. We are also encouraged by the promise of a draft Convention on Chemical Weapons which we welcome as a positive sign of a political will to negotiate on this issue. We hope that this negotiation will take place early and that a positive agreement to negotiate will be extended over the entire gamut of disarmament issues. My delegation is also mindful of the useful discussions that took place in previous sessions, which are a foundation on which we can build. Document CD/416, for example, reflects some of these achievements. However, the value of past achievements can only be acknowledged by making them a basis for future progress and not by regressing or standing still. A pause in disarmament negotiations or a fruitless retreading of ground already covered in our discussions here is in effect a backward step. For while we talk the arms race goes on and there is no pause in the research, development and production of armaments. A pause in the manufacture and deployment of weapons, especially nuclear weapons, is what is needed.